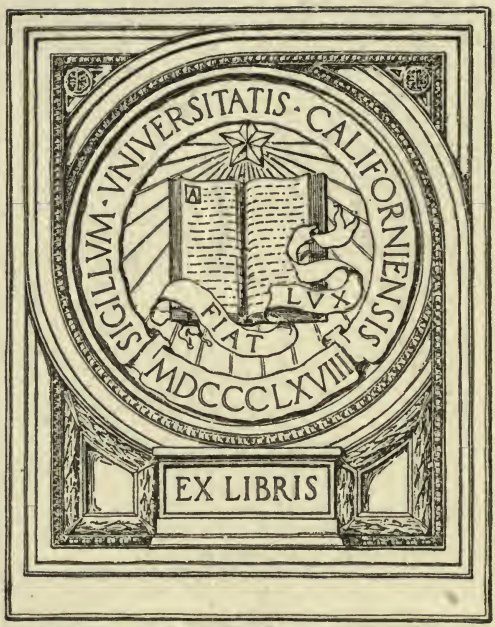

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A MANUAL

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL:

WITH AN APPENDIX ON ENGLISH METRES.

BY

THOMAS ARNOLD, M.A.,

OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

AMERICAN EDITION, REVISED.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTICE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

[In order to enable them to present this valuable work to the public at a reduced price, the American publishers have been obliged to make but one change, and that a change which nowise impairs the usefulness of the book. In place of the long preliminary chapter in the English edition, they have inserted a chapter from Mr. Arnold's "From Chaucer to Wordsworth." In the opening sentence of the preface to the latter work, will be found the sufficient reason for the change. "As the following work," says he, "is designed chiefly for the use of those who know no other language but English, I have abridged much more than is usual that portion of the history which relates to the Saxon and Anglo-Norman times, during which all the important works that appeared in England were written in Anglo-Saxon, French, or Latin."]

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OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

ANGLO-SAXON AND NORMAN PERIODS.

449–1350.

In undertaking to write a short history of English literature, it may be useful to place one's self, at the outset, in the position of a person to whom the subject is wholly new.

Every one possessed of any education cannot fail to be acquainted with a certain number of English books, and to know of the existence of many more; and also must often hear the names of English men or women, dead or alive, spoken of as having become distinguished through writing books. It is said, that, on the average, not fewer than two thousand distinct works, upon every conceivable subject, are published in this country every year. Now, this country in which we live has been inhabited by men more or less civilized, for at least thirty successive generations; and, although it is but of late years that our countrymen have taken to writing books at such a prodigious rate, it is obvious that the same causes which at the present day are continually adding to the number of English books must have

been more or less at work for a very long time past; from which it follows that the entire stock of English books must be very large indeed. When we have arrived at this conclusion, various questions at once suggest themselves; such as, What proportion of all the English books that have been written since the English race settled in this island have been preserved to our times? Are many of those that have survived worth preserving, or the contrary, and on what grounds? Were the old books written in the same sort of English that we now use? and, if not, what was the nature of the difference? These and many similar questions will naturally occur; and it is in order to furnish something like satisfactory answers, that the present work has been prepared.

The word "literature" is used in two principal senses, — to express the whole number of books that have been written in any language (thus we speak of the Greek, French, German, literatures, &c.); and also to signify the profession or pursuit of writing, as when we speak of a person addicting himself to literature. But the former of these two senses is much the more common; and it is the one which will be adhered to throughout the present work.

The English race first began to colonize this country about fourteen hundred years ago. Before that time, England was called Britain, and was inhabited by a people of Celtic origin, allied to the modern Welsh (and, more remotely, to the Irish), known as Britons. The language spoken by the Britons was quite different from English; and therefore, whatever books may have been written in that language, either before or after the arrival of the English race, they do not concern us, who are only inquiring into the history of *English* literature.

The first English who arrived on our shores called themselves Angles. They came from Schleswig-Holstein, that border-land between Denmark and Germany, which has been for centuries a bone of contention between the Dane and the German. But the language which they then spoke approached, on the whole, nearer to German than to Danish, though it exhibits points of resemblance to both. They were joined in their great colonizing enterprise by the Saxons, a people occupying both banks of the Elbe near its mouth, and by other German tribes. The language spoken by the Saxons seems to have agreed very closely with that spoken by the Angles, though it had probably fewer Danish peculiarities; and, in consequence of this close agreement, their common tongue has received the name of *Anglo-Saxon.* The Angles gave their name to the country, Angla or Engla-land, England.

In the course of about two hundred years from the date (A.D. 449) of their first arrival, these Angles and Saxons had established themselves in the greater part of England, and in the Lowlands of Scotland. Their language was spoken from the Orkneys to the Isle of Wight, and from Norwich to Dorchester. It may now be asked, Was this language like the English that we speak now? Did they write any books in it? And have these books been preserved? These questions will be answered in the following section.

Section 1.—Anglo-Saxon Literature (449–1066).

The language which our Angle and Saxon forefathers spoke was very different from ours; and the difference consisted principally in this: that a very large number of French and Latin words have, since their time, been added to the old stock, while many of their words have fallen into disuse. Another difference

is, that, while our grammar is very simple, theirs was very complicated. Consequently, however well acquainted we may be with English, we shall be able to make nothing of an Anglo-Saxon book without special study: at most we might recognize a familiar word or two here and there. This being the case, I do not intend to dwell upon this part of the subject; for, though we have got upon the English *race*, it is plain that we have not yet got to English *literature*. However, since what our forefathers thought and wrote can never be quite uninteresting to us, I shall give brief answers to the two other questions which I supposed to be asked, and also print, at the end of the section, a few lines from an Anglo-Saxon book, as a specimen of their language.

While they lived in Germany, and for the first hundred and fifty years after they landed in England, we do not know that the Angles and Saxons wrote any books: if they did, they have not come down to us. During all that time they were Pagans, worshipping Thor, Woden, and other imaginary deities, who were the objects of belief among the northern nations. But, about the year 600 after Christ, St. Augustine and other missionaries, who were sent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great, commenced the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. At the same time that they taught them religion, these good men communicated to their disciples many other good and useful things; in particular, they instructed them in the use of the Roman alphabet, and taught them to read Greek and Latin books. How important this was will clearly appear, when we consider that, at that time, no literature existed in any other European language except these two. From reading and copying Greek and Latin books, the Anglo-Saxons soon advanced to writing

books in their own language. Of these books many have been preserved, and are now to be had in print. The great King Alfred is the author of many translations of Latin books, mostly histories, into Anglo-Saxon. The most interesting among these is his translation of "The Ecclesiastical History of the Venerable Bede," a work of the utmost value for the history of the Anglo-Saxon times. There is also a valuable book, called "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," which gives an account of most of the important events which happened in England, from the Christian era down to the year 1154: this book was put together by the monks of different monasteries. Of the poetry the greater portion is upon sacred subjects; but we have also a long and very curious poem called "Beowulf," in which are related the adventures and great deeds of northern warriors in Denmark and the south of Sweden. The rhythm of all the Anglo-Saxon poetry depended on what is called alliteration; the lines, arranged in couplets, were short, each containing two accents; and the general rule was, that two accented syllables in the first line of each couplet, and one accented syllable in the second line, should all begin with the same letter; e.g., —

Héofon to hrófe,
Hálig Scippend.

[Heaven for roof,
Holy Creator.]

The following extract is taken from "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle;" it refers to the year 457: —

Her Hengest and Æsc his sunu gefuhton wiþ Bryttas, on bære stowe þe is gecweden Creccanford, and þær ofslogon feower þusenda wera. And ða Bryttas þa forleton Cent-lond, and mid myclum ege flugon to Lunden-byrig.[1]

[1] Note, that the character ð represents the sound of *th* in *this;* and the character þ, the sound of *th* in *thin.*

TRANSLATION.

At this time Hengest and Æsc his son fought against the Britons at the place which is called Crayford, and there slew four thousand men. And then the Britons they forsook Kent-land, and with much dismay fled to London-town.

Section 2. — The Norman Period (1066–1350).

In the year 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, brought an army over to England, defeated King Harold at Hastings in Sussex, and had himself crowned King of England. The Normans, who formed the greater portion of his army, were originally, as the name itself implies, North-men, or inhabitants of the North of Europe (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), who had settled in France about the year 950. During their sojourn in France, they had unlearned their own language, and had adopted that of their French neighbors. Thus it happened, that, for a long time after the Norman conquest, the king, nearly all his nobles and knights, and all the leading men among the clergy, spoke in French, and wrote either in French or in Latin, having no more knowledge of the tongue of the natives than was required to make their orders intelligible to the peasants who worked for them, and often not even so much as that.

During the whole of this period, what literature there was was for the most part composed by the clergy; for very few of the laity could read and write. The clergy alone had leisure and opportunity for accumulating that acquaintance with the works of previous thinkers, and that knowledge of past transactions, without one or the other of which, nothing can be done in theology, philosophy, or history. St. Anselm (an Italian by birth, but holding the see of Canterbury under William II. and Henry I.) was the first who

endeavored to clothe religious doctrines in philosophical formulas. The famous Abelard, a Frenchman, asserted the identity of faith and reason, a doctrine from which the inference is easy, that what is inconsistent with reason can be no part of the true faith. St. Bernard, who flourished in the first half of the twelfth century, eloquently combated this view. The scholastic philosophy founded by Peter Lombard, author of "The Book of Sentences," a work which appeared at Paris in 1151, soon engrossed all the most powerful thinkers in Europe. Several of the leading "school-men"—Alexander Hales, styled "the Irrefragable," Duns Scotus, "the Subtle Doctor," and William of Occam, "the Invincible Doctor"—were natives of the British Isles. But all their works were written in Latin; great part of their lives was spent abroad; and the influence which they exerted, besides that it extended quite as much to foreign countries as to England, was almost confined to members of their own profession. It will not be expected, therefore, that, in a work of a purely elementary character, any detailed account of their writings can be given.

In the department of science, a great light appeared in England in the thirteenth century. This was Roger Bacon, a friar in the Franciscan monastery at Oxford, who in his *Opus Majus* ("Greater" or "Principal Work"), propounds most enlightened views upon the value of experiment as a means of arriving at physical truth. He was encouraged by the high-minded Pope Clement IV., but condemned and imprisoned under his narrow-minded successor, Nicholas. In truth, he was so far in advance of his age, that his scientific researches communicated no stimulus, and found no imitators.

The historians, too, were all ecclesiastics, and wrote

in Latin. William of Malmesbury, the first competent historian since the time of Bede, wrote a "History of the Kings of England," which comes down to the year 1142. Geoffrey of Monmouth, who lived about the same time, is the author of a well-known fabulous "History of the Britons," from which the romance-writers drew the materials for their poems about Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Among many other names, we shall only mention that of Matthew Paris, a monk of St. Albans, the author of a voluminous and valuable chronicle, coming down to the year 1259.

Lay writers in this period confined themselves to poetry; not that they had the monopoly of that. Numbers of witty, satirical, and sometimes coarse poems, were written in Latin, by priests or monks. But our business is only with what was written in the vernacular languages. Before the Normans came over to England, many poets had appeared in France; and a considerable taste for literature, especially for poetry, had sprung up in that country. In their new homes, the Normans did not lose this taste: on the contrary, poets and minstrels were more and more appreciated and caressed; and even one of our kings, Richard I., was proud to rank himself among their number. Few laymen knew how to read in those times: so the custom was for minstrels and reciting poets to stroll about the country from castle to castle, repeating at each, to a delighted audience, long passages from historical or romantic poems, generally with musical accompaniment. But these poems were all in French, and therefore we have no direct concern with them; it was necessary, however, to say something about them, because the first rude literary attempts in English, after the Conquest, were all either imitations or trans-

lations of these French pieces. Romances and verse-histories were the chief productions of those ages. Romances were originally so called because they were written in the *Romance* tongue, that is, the dialect which the *Roman* occupation of Gaul (France) had caused to grow up out of the gradual corruption of the Latin language, and its adulteration with foreign words. Many of the tales with which story-books make us familiar in our childhood, as that of Guy of Warwick and the Dun Cow, or that of Roland and Oliver, or that of Bevis of Hampton, were originally French romances, composed at the period I am speaking of: they were then translated into English verse, and, after being told in many different ways, have at last made their appearance in our popular story-books. Of the verse-histories in English, the earliest known was written by a Worcestershire monk called Layamon: it is called the "Brut," that is, the chronicle, and is a free translation of a French verse-history of England, written by one Richard Wace. Another work of the same kind is the rhyming chronicle of Robert Manning, of which a specimen will be given presently. Besides these pieces, a few ballads and hymns have come down to us. In all these, and also in the verse-histories, except that of Layamon, many French words occur, — the inevitable consequence of the daily intercourse and close contact of two populations, one speaking French, the other English. In the next period, we shall see this process going on still more actively.

Speaking of himself as an author, Layamon, who flourished in the reign of John, or about the year 1200, thus writes: —

"He wonede at Ernleie
Wid than gode cnihte,

Uppen Sevarne;
Merie ther him thohte;
Faste bi Radistone:
Ther heo bokes radde.
Hit com him on mode,
And on his thonke,
That he wolde of Engelond
The rihtnesse telle;
Wat the men i-hote weren,
And wanene hi comen,
The Englene lond
Ærest afden
After than flode,
That fram God com;
That al ere acwelde
Cwic that hit funde,
Bot Noe and Sem,
Japhet and Cam,
And hire four wifes,
That mid ham there weren." [1]

The following is a literal translation: —

"He dwelt at Ernley, with the good knight, upon the Severn; pleasant it seemed to him there; close by Radistone: there he books read. It came into his mind, and in his thought, that he would of England the exact story tell; what the men were called, and whence they came, who first occupied the English land, after the flood that from God came, that quelled [killed] all here that it found quick [alive], except Noe and Sem, Japhet and Cam [Ham], and their four wives that were with them there."

Robert Manning's English, as will be seen, is of a much more advanced character. The following passage is from the opening of the second part of his chronicle, which was composed about the year 1330: —

"Lordynges that be now here,
If ye wille listene and lere [learn]
All the story of Inglande,
Als [as] Robert Mannyng wryten [written] it fand,
And on Inglysch has it schewed,

[1] Extracted, with a few slight corrections, from Craik's Outlines of the History of the English Language.

Not for the lered but for the lewed [lay people];
For tho [those] that on this land wonn [dwell]
That the Latin ne Frankys conn [know neither Latin nor French],
For to hauf solace and gamen,
In felauschip when tha sitt samen [together];
And it is wisdom for to wytten [know]
The state of the land, and hef it wryten,
What manere of folk first it wan,
And of what kynde it first began;
And gude it is for many thynges
For to here [hear] the dedis of kynges,
Whilk [which] were foles, and whilk were wyse,
And whilk of tham couth [knew] most quantyse [quaintness, i.e., artfulness];
And whilk did wrong, and whilk ryght,
And whilk mayntened pes [peace] and fight.
Of thare dedes sall be mi sawe [story],
In what tyme, and of what law,
I sholl you tell, from gre to gre [degree, i.e., step by step]
Sen [since] the tyme of Sir Noe."

The language of the "Ormulum," a singular poem of the thirteenth century, not rhymed but rhythmical, is of an intermediate character; it has fewer Anglo-Saxon forms, and more French or Latin words, than Layamon's "Brut," but is much less modernized than that of Manning. It consists of passages and narratives, taken from Scripture, and rudely versified, with accompanying commentaries. The date of its composition is supposed to be about 1250. The following passage may serve as a specimen: —

"Annd o þatt illke nahht tatt Crist
Wass borenn her to manne,
Wass He yet, alls His wille wass,
Awwnedd onn oþerr wise.
He sette a steorne upp o þe lifft
Full brad, and brihht, and shene,
On æst hallf o þiss middlelærd,
Swa summ þe goddspell kiþeþþ,
Amang þatt follc þatt cann innsihht
Off mani þing þurrh steorrness,
Amang þe Calldeowisshe þeod

Þatt cann innsihht o steorrness.
And þatt þeod wass hæþene þeod
Þatt Crist gaff þa swillc takenn;
Forrþi þatt He þeggm wollde þa
To rihhte læfe wendenn.
And son se þegg þatt steorrne leom
Þær sæghenn upp o liffte,
Þreo kingess off þatt illke land
Full wel itt unnderrstodenn,
And wisstenn witerrlig þærþurrh
Þatt swillc new king wass awwnedd,
Þatt wass soþ Godd [1] and soþ mann ec,
An had off twinne kinde." [2]

TRANSLATION.

"And on that same night that Christ
Was born here as man,
Was He, as His will was,
Manifested in yet another fashion.
He set a star up in the sky
Full broad, and bright, and fair,
On the east side of this middle-earth,
Even as the gospel declares,
Among that people that knows insight
Of many things through the stars,
Among the Chaldæan people,
That knows insight of stars.
And that people was a heathen people,
To which Christ gave then such a token,
Because that He them would then
To right belief turn.
And, as soon as they that star's gleam
There saw up in the sky,
Three kings of that same land
Full well it understood,
And knew clearly thereby
That such a new king was showed forth,
Who was true God and true man also,
One person of two natures."

[1] The doubling of the consonants throughout this extract is merely a peculiar device employed by Ormin, the author, to indicate that the preceding vowel in all such cases is short.

[2] From the Ormulum (edited by Dr. R. White, 1852), vol. i., line 3,426.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD.

1350–1450.

HITHERTO such English writers as we have met with since the Conquest have generally appeared in the humble guise of translators or imitators. In the period before us we at last meet with original invention applied on a large scale: this, therefore, is the point at which English literature takes its true commencement.

The Latin and French compositions, which engaged so much of our attention in the previous period, may in this be disposed of in a few words. That Englishmen still continued to write French poetry, we have the proof in many unprinted poems by Gower, and might also infer from a passage, often quoted, in the prologue to Chaucer's "Testament of Love." But few such pieces are of sufficient merit to bear printing. In French prose scarcely any thing can be mentioned besides the despatches, treaties, &c., contained in Rymer's "Fœdera," and similar compilations, and the original draft of Sir John Maundevile's "Travels in the Holy Land." Froissart's famous "Chronicle" may, indeed, almost be considered as belonging to us, since it treats principally of English feats of arms, and its author held a post in the court of Edward III.

In Latin poetry there is nothing that deserves men-

tion except the "Liber Metricus" of Thomas Elmham, concerning the career of Henry V.; edited by Mr. Cole, for the Rolls Series, in 1858. Elmham, who flourished about the year 1440, was a Benedictine monk in the monastery of St. Austin's, Canterbury. The poem contains 1349 lines, and is, as Byron would have said, not so much poetry as "prose run mad;" in proof of which, let these lines suffice: —

"Hic Jon Oldcastel Christi fuit insidiator,
Amplectens hæreses, in scelus omne ruens;
Fautor perfidiæ, pro sectâ Wiclivianâ,
Obicibus Regis fert mala vota sacris."

Whether the last line means, "He wishes ill to the king's devout objects," or any thing else, it is hard to say.

In Latin prose, we have a version, made by himself, of "Maundevile's Travels," and the chroniclers (amongst others of less note) Robert de Avesbury, Henry Knyghton, Thomas Walsingham, and John Fordun. Robert de Avesbury was registrar of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Court, and wrote a fair and accurate history of the reign of Edward III. (published by Hearne in 1720), coming down to the year 1356, in which, or in the following year, he died. Henry Knyghton, the date of whose death is unknown, was a canon regular of Leicester; he is the author of "Compilatio de Eventibus Angliæ a tempore Regis Edgari usque ad mortem Regis Ricardi II." His account of the rise of Lollardism, though written with a strong anti-Wycliffite bias, is highly interesting and valuable.

The "Historia Anglicana" of Thomas Walsingham, a work to which all modern historians continually refer in writing of the events of the fourteenth and earlier

portion of the fifteenth centuries, was edited by Mr. Riley for the Rolls Series in 1864. Scarcely any thing is known of Walsingham, except that he was a monk of St. Albans; that he compiled, besides the "Historia," an account of Normandy, called "Ypodigma Neustriæ;" and that he was still alive in 1419. The "Historia," as it stands, extends from 1272 to 1422; but Mr. Riley shows some ground for supposing that the portion compiled by Walsingham himself may reach no further than to 1392; the only really original and valuable part even of this being the fifteen years between 1377 and 1392, while the concluding thirty years were added by some unknown hand.

John Fordun, a secular priest of Kincardineshire, is the author of the "Scotichronicon," a history of Scotland in Latin prose, written toward the close of the fourteenth century. The entire work contains sixteen books; but of these only five and part of the sixth were composed by Fordun, the remainder being the work of Abbot Bower, who brings down the story to the death of James I. in 1437.[1]

In theology and philosophy occurs the name of John Wyclif, the ablest schoolman of his day in England, admired by his contemporaries as an expert logician and prolific system-monger, long before he wrote those attacks on the hierarchy, the mendicant friars, and the received doctrine concerning the eucharist, which gained for him with posterity the name of the first English reformer. His numerous Latin works, very few of which have ever been printed, are classed by Dr. Shirley in his excellent "Catalogue of the Original Works of John Wyclif,"[2] under six heads: 1. Philosophy and Systematic Theology; 2. Sermons, Expositions,

[1] Irving's History of Scottish Poetry, edited by Dr. Carlyle, p. 116.
[2] Clarendon Press, 1865.

and Practical Theology; 3. Protests, Disputations, and Epistles; 4. On Church Government and Endowments; 5. On the Monastic Orders; 6. On the Secular Clergy. Under the first head is included the "Summa Theologiæ," a body of divinity of stupendous magnitude, the substance of which he afterwards reproduced in the "Trialogus, sive Summa Summæ," the best known of all his works, printed at Basle by the Swiss reformers in 1525.[1] Two or three of his shorter Latin tracts are contained in the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," which, in spite of its enigmatical title, is a volume of remarkable interest, in respect of the light which it throws on the ecclesiastical history of the last half of the fourteenth century. Here are described in detail the first bickerings between Wyclif and the friars his opponents, the synodical proceedings taken by the bishops against the rising heresy, the turbulent sympathy of the masters at Oxford with the accused. and the steps taken by the Government, on a scale of ever-increasing severity, to enforce submission to the hierarchy. Dr. Shirley's introduction to the volume, which was edited by him for the Rolls Series in 1858, explains the acts and tendencies of Wyclif, in a spirit characterized alike by penetration and fairness.

The obvious cause of the decline of French and Latin composition in England was the growing prevalence, social and literary, of the native speech. To this many circumstances contributed. The gradual consolidation of nationalities, which had long been making steady progress throughout Europe, had been constantly drawing the Norman barons and the English commonalty closer together, and separating both from the rival nationality of France. Nor had the nation at any time

[1] And lately carefully edited by Dr. Lechler of Leipsic, for the Clarendon Press, 1869.

lost, so to speak, its personal identity: it was *England* for which the Norman Richard fought at Acre; and even William of Malmesbury, writing not a hundred years after the Conquest, speaks of that event rather as a change of dynasty occurring in English history, than as of a complete social revolution. The influence of the Church must have pressed powerfully in the same direction. Though the Conqueror filled nearly all the sees with Normans, it was not long before native Englishmen, through that noble respect for and recognition of human equality which were — theoretically always, and sometimes practically — maintained in the midst of feudalism by the Church of the Middle Ages, obtained a fair proportion of them. The political and official power of bishops in those days was great; and the native tongue of an English Archbishop of Canterbury could not even by the proud Norman barons, his compeers in Parliament, be treated with disrespect. Again: since 1340, England and France had been constantly at war; in this war the English-speaking archers, not the French-speaking barons, had won the chief laurels; and the tongue of a humbled beaten enemy was likely to be less attractive to the mass of Englishmen than ever. The well-known law of Edward III., passed in 1362, directing the English language to be used thenceforward in judicial pleadings, was merely an effect of the slow but resistless operation of these and other cognate causes. Again: it must not be lost sight of, that a sort of tacit compromise passed between the English and French speaking portions of the population: the former were to retain the entire grammar (so much, at least as was left of it) of the native speech; all the conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns — the osseous structure, so to speak, of the language — were to be English; while, in return, the Normans were to be at liberty

to import French nouns, adjectives, and verbs at discretion, without troubling themselves to hunt for the corresponding terms in the old literary Anglo-Saxon. Finally this English language, so re-cast, became in the fourteenth century the chosen instrument of thought and expression for a great poet; and, after Chaucer, no Englishman could feel ashamed of his native tongue, nor doubt of its boundless capabilities.

Of the parentage of Geoffrey Chaucer nothing is known; but we have his own word for it[1] that London was the place of his birth. The year seems to have been 1328,[2] that in which Edward III. married Philippa of Hainault. Leland, writing in the time of Henry VIII., says that he was "*nobili loco natus;*" but he gives no authority for the statement. Godwin's supposition, founded upon a number of minute allusions scattered through his works, that his father was a merchant, or burgess of London, seems to be much more probable.

That he was educated at a university, may be held as certain; but, whether at Oxford or Cambridge, is not so clear. There is a passage in "The Court of Love," line 912,—

> "Philogenet I called am ferre and nere,
> Of Cambridge clerk;"

which seems to tell in favor of Cambridge. On the other hand, it is known that his most intimate friends and disciples, Gower, Strode, and Occleve, were Oxford men; and the earnest scholar who makes one of the group of Canterbury pilgrims is a "clerk of Oxenford." In 1359 he served in the great army of invasion which Edward III. led over into France. In the course of

[1] In "The Testament of Love."

[2] This, however, is merely a conjecture of Speght (writing in 1597), coupling the date (1400) on the tombstone with Leland's assertion that he lived to the "period of gray hairs."

this bootless expedition Chaucer was taken prisoner, but seems to have been released at the peace of Bretigny, in 1360. His marriage with Philippa Rouet is thought to have taken place in the same year. This lady was a native of Hainault, and maid of honor to Queen Philippa. Her sister Catherine was the third wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. These circumstances readily explain Chaucer's long and close connection with the court, commencing with the year 1367, when the king granted him a pension of twenty marks for life, under the designation of "*dilectus valettus noster.*" His prudence and practical wisdom seem to have been as conspicuous as his more brilliant gifts, since he was at various times employed by the king on important diplomatic missions. One of these took him to Italy in 1373, in which year he is thought with the highest probability to have become acquainted with Petrarch, who was then living at Arqua, near Padua. What other sense can be attached to the famous passage in the prologue to "The Clerk's Tale"?—

> "I wil you telle a tale, which that I
> Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
> As proved by his wordes and his werk;
> He is now dead, and nayled in his chest,
> Now God give his soule wel good rest!
> Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete,
> Highte this clerk, whose rhetorike swete
> Enlumynd all Ytail of poetrie,
> As Linian did of philosophie."

Petrarch died in 1374, so that the acquaintance could not have been formed at the time of Chaucer's second visit to Italy, in 1378.

In 1374 Chaucer was appointed to the lucrative office of comptroller of the customs in the port of London. About the time of the king's death, in 1377, he was employed on more than one secret and delicate mission,

of one of which the object was to negotiate the marriage of Richard II. with a French princess. The new king granted him a second pension of the same amount as the first. In 1386 he sat as a burgess for the county of Kent in the parliament which met at Westminster. John of Gaunt, his friend and patron, was at this time absent upon an expedition to Portugal; and the Duke of Gloucester, another of the king's uncles, a man of cruel and violent character, succeeded in this parliament in driving the king's friends out of office, and engrossing all political power in the hands of himself and his party. In November of the same year a commission was appointed, through the Duke's influence, armed with general and highly inquisitorial powers, extending over the royal household and all the public departments. In December we find that Chaucer was dismissed from his office as comptroller. It is evident that these two circumstances stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect. The commission may perhaps have seized upon the pretext of some official irregularities (for Chaucer received the appointment under stringent conditions); but it is clear that he suffered in common with the rest of the king's friends and favorites, not on account of his "connection with the Duke of Lancaster," but simply as a courtier.[1] This view of the matter is confirmed by the fact, that in 1389, in which year Richard broke loose from his uncle's tutelage, and dismissed him and his satellites, we find that Chaucer was appointed to the office of clerk of the king's works. In the interval he had been reduced to such distress as to be compelled to dispose of his pensions. From some unascertained cause he ceased to hold this new situation some time in the year 1391. Three years after-

[1] Mr. Bell, in the Life prefixed to his excellent edition of Chaucer, seems to have misapprehended this transaction.

wards the king conferred on him a fresh pension of twenty pounds a year for life, to which Henry IV. in the first year of his reign (1399) added a pension of forty marks. Except these dry facts, we have absolutely no certain knowledge respecting the last ten years of Chaucer's life; but it is satisfactory to reflect that the last days of the father of English poetry were at least spent in external comfort, and free from the troubles of poverty.

Thus far no mention has been made of Chaucer's writings, the composition of most of which there is no means of accurately assigning to this or that year of his life. These must now be considered, but historically only, not critically.[1] All that will be attempted here is, after enumerating his principal works, to determine so far as possible their approximate dates, to describe the various literary materials which he had at his disposal, and to show the different degrees in which the use of those materials, and his own genius as developed through the circumstances which surrounded him, influenced his work.

For reasons presently to be mentioned, we have arranged the poet's chief works in the following order: —

The Assembly of Foules The Flower and the Leaf The Court of Love	First period.
Chaucer's Dreme (about 1360) Boke of the Duchesse (about 1370) Romaunt of the Rose House of Fame	Second period.
Troylus and Creseide The Knight's Tale (and perhaps others of the Canterbury Tales)	Third period.

[1] For some critical remarks on "The Canterbury Tales," see p. 379.

Legende of Good Women The Prologue, and many of the Canterbury Tales The Astrolabie (1391) The Testament of Love [1]	Fourth period.

The works of the first period are by general consent assigned to Chaucer's youth. It is usual to reckon "The Court of Love" as the earliest of all, and to assign it to his eighteenth year, because the seventh stanza begins,

"When I was yonge, at eighteen yeres of age."

But the direct inference from these words, as Mr. Bell remarks, is that the poem was written some time *after* the poet's eighteenth year. Mr. Bell, however, considers the modest, self-depreciating tone in which the poem opens, as conclusive of the fact, that it was composed in early youth. But this test is fallacious, since similar protestations of ignorance and unskilfulness in his art are of constant occurrence all through Chaucer's works. They occur, for instance, in "The Testament of Love," one of the very latest.[2] On the other hand, the smoothness of the versification, the perfect command over the resources of the language, and the finish of the poem generally, seem to bespeak the master's rather than the tyro's hand. A passage in "The Assembly of Foules," implying that the poet had as

[1] Since this was written, the genuineness of several of the works in the list given above has been discussed or denied by Mr. Bradshaw, Professor Ten Brink, Mr. Furnivall, and others. However, it is a subject which has been stirred but not yet settled; the dust of the controversy has not subsided; *adhuc sub judice lis est.* I prefer, therefore, while admitting the inadequacy and possible inaccuracy of much that I have written here, to defer re-casting it to a future opportunity.

[2] 'Certes I wote wel, there shall be made more scorne and jape of me, that I, *so unworthily clothed altogither in the cloudie cloude of unconning*, will putten me in prees to speke of love.'

yet no personal experience in love, is a more unequivocal evidence of early composition.[1] For this reason we have placed that poem the first on the list.

The link of connection between the poems of the first period is this: that they all betray in the strongest manner the influence of the ideas and language of the Provençal poets. This influence need not, as Warton remarks, have been direct; it may have come to Chaucer, not immediately from the Troubadours, but mediately through the Trouvères; but of its Provençal origin there can be no doubt. It was in Provence that the strange practice arose among the poets, of parodying the theologians; for the sacred names of religion, they had their god of Love, and his mother Venus; for disputations in the schools upon theological theses, they had their "tensons" in knightly or royal halls upon various knotty points in love; and, for the solemn tribunals of ecclesiastical councils, their regularly organized "Courts of Love," to decide the debate between rival troubadours. All these characteristics are copiously illustrated in those of Chaucer's works which we have here grouped together.

The works of the second period indicate not Provençal, but Norman-French influences. They are all written in that short eight-syllable metre which the Trouvères usually employed for their romances and *fabliaux*. "The House of Fame," evidently the production of Chaucer's mature age, a poem showing much thought and learning, is quite in the style, no less than in the metre, of the *fabliaux*. "The Romaunt of the Rose" is a translation of the long allegorical

[1] 'For al be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folk hir hire,
Yet happeth me ful oft in bokes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruel ire.'

poem bearing that title, begun by Guillaume de Lorris (died 1260), and continued by Jean de Meun. Chaucer translated the whole of Lorris's portion, extending to more than four thousand lines, and about three thousand six hundred out of the eighteen thousand lines which form Jean de Meun's continuation.

The poems classed under the third period are marked by the influence of Italian literature. "Troylus and Creseide" is a free translation from the "Filostrato" of Boccaccio; "The Knight's Tale" is a version of the same author's "Theseide;" and the general plan of the "Canterbury Tales" was clearly suggested by that of the "Decameron." The ten friends assembled, during the prevalence of the plague, in a country-house outside the walls of Florence, and beguiling the tedium of a ten-days' quarantine by each telling a story daily, are represented in the English poem by the thirty-two pilgrims bound to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, each of whom (except the host) binds himself to tell a story for the amusement of the company, both going and returning. Several others of the "Canterbury Tales," besides "The Knight's Tale," are from Italian sources. The clerk says expressly, in his prologue, that he learned the tale of Grisilde from Petrarch, who made in 1373 a Latin translation of the original story, as it stands in the "Decameron."

In the works of the fourth period, though extraneous influences may of course be detected, Chaucer's original genius is predominant. The "Legende of Good Women" was written to make amends for the many disparaging reflections which Chaucer had cast in former works on woman's truth and constancy in love. Alcestis, the self-sacrificing wife of Admetus, whom in "The Court of Love" he names as queen and mistress under Venus in the castle of Love, imposes the following task upon her poet: —

"Now wol I seyne what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, understonde yt here: —
Thow shalt while that thou livest, yere by yere,
The most partye of thy time spende
In making of a glorious legende
Of good wymmen, maydenes, and wyves,
That weren trewe in loving all hire lyves.

The late date of the composition of the poem is ascertained by the mention in it of most of his principal works: —

"Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,
That is an heresye ayeins my law."

And, —

"And of Cresyde thou hast seyde as the lyste."

Again, —

"He made the boke that hight the Hous of Fame,
And eke the death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte."

"The Love of Palamon and Arcyte" is "The Knight's Tale," the first and longest of the series. The mention of this as a separate work confirms the opinion that many of the "Canterbury Tales" were in circulation independently, before they were brought together and fitted into the general framework of the poem.

The prologue to the Tales was probably the latest or nearly the latest part of the work. It consists of sketches, drawn with a spirit, life, and humor inexpressible, of the thirty-two Canterbury pilgrims. The "Astrolabie" is a treatise on astronomy, composed in 1391, for the use of Chaucer's second son, Louis. It opens thus: "Lytel Lowys my sonne, I perceive well

by certain evidences thyne abylytè to lerne sciences touching nombres and proporcions." "Lytel Lowys" was at the time ten years old. "The Testament of Love" will be considered when we come to speak of the prose writings of the period. It is probably impossible to fix with exactness the date of its composition. He mentions in it, that he has been "berafte out of dignity of office;" words which might apply either to his dismissal from the office of comptroller of customs in 1386, or to his losing the appointment of clerk of the king's works in 1391.

"The Canterbury Tales," therefore, as a whole, belong to the last period of Chaucer's life, when his judgment and insight into character, developed by a long and wisely-used experience, were at their height, while his imagination gave no sign of growing dim. The machinery of the poem has been already in part explained. Of the thirty-two persons forming the company of pilgrims, one, the host of the Tabard, the inn in Southwark from which they start, is the guide and chief of the expedition. He is to tell no tale himself, but to be the judge of those which the other pilgrims tell. If the scheme announced in the prologue (that each pilgrim should tell two tales going, and two returning) had been fully executed, we should thus have a hundred and twenty-four tales. In fact, there are but twenty-four, two of which are told by Chaucer, and a third by the Chanounes Yeoman, who is not one of the original party, but, with his master, joins the pilgrims on the road. This incompleteness is in marked contrast to the symmetrical exactness with which the less ambitious plan of the "Decameron" is worked out.

Chaucer was the centre of a group of literary men, of whom he was the friend or master; who admired and

loved him, and in most cases strove to imitate him, though with very indifferent success. Of these, John Gower, the "ancient Gower" of Shakspeare, was the chief. Scarcely any thing is known about him, except that he graduated at Oxford, and was rich. He wrote many French poems, evidently conceiving that by so doing he found a larger audience than by writing in English. At the end of one of these, he says, —

> "*A l'université de tout le monde*
> Johan Gower ceste balade envoie."

His principal production was a work in three parts, respectively entitled "Speculum Meditantis," "Vox Clamantis," and "Confessio Amantis." The "Speculum" is in French rhymes, in ten books; it was never printed, nor is a manuscript of it known to exist. The poem, according to Warton, "displays the general nature of virtue and vice, enumerates the felicities of conjugal fidelity by examples selected from various authors, and describes the path which the reprobate ought to pursue for the recovery of the divine grace."[1] The "Vox Clamantis," a poem in Latin elegiacs, in seven books, edited by Mr. Coxe of the Bodleian Library, in 1850, for the Roxburgh Society, is in substance a history of the insurrection of the Commons, under Wat Tyler, in the reign of Richard II. The "Confessio Amantis," an English poem in eight books, written in the short romance metre of eight syllables, was finished in 1393. It has been frequently printed. Imitating the fantastic and exaggerated language of the Troubadours, Gower presents us in this poem with a long colloquy between a lover and his confessor, who is a

[1] According to Mr. Ellis (note in Warton, vol. ii. p. 306, ed. 1824), this description is really applicable to one of Gower's shorter poems, which Warton mistook for "The Speculum."

priest of Venus: the lover confessing, under the several heads of the seven deadly sins, the respects in which he has offended against Love; and the priest giving him instructions in the duties of a lover, under the guise, generally, of relevant anecdotes, collected from his multifarious reading. The Provençal poets had introduced this fashion of deifying Love, and painting him as the sovereign ruler over human life and destiny. A considerable portion of the poem consists of learned disquisitions upon politics, astrology, and physiology, stuffed with all the crude absurdities which suited the coarse palate of that age. The materials of the tales are gathered from various sources, but chiefly from the "Gesta Romanorum," and other vast compilations, which, under the name of "Universal Histories," in which the smallest modicum of fact was diluted in an incredible quantity of fiction, amused and edified the *naïve* credulity of the Middle Age.

If chronological order had been strictly followed, William Langland, the author of "The Vision of Piers Plowman," should have been mentioned before Gower, if not before Chaucer. The poem is allegorical, and, like many of Chaucer's, describes a vision seen in a dream. It extends to about fourteen thousand short, or seven thousand long lines, of two or four accents. It is written throughout with a didactic purpose, which often appears in the form of special satire on particular classes or professions. Abuses in religion, and the malpractices of ecclesiastics, form, as might be expected, the chief mark for this satire. A crowd of allegorical personages, representing different types of human character, after being brought to repentance by the preaching of Reason, earnestly desire to find out the way to the abode of Truth. Their authorized spiritual guides do not know the road; and it is Piers the plough-

man from whom they at last obtain the guidance which they require. The metre is alliterative, like that of the old Saxon poets. The writer seems to address himself to a class socially inferior to that which Chaucer and Gower sought to please, — a class, therefore, almost purely Saxon, and likely to receive with pleasure a work composed in the old rhythm dear to their forefathers. The Vision is determined by internal allusions to about the year 1362. "Piers Plowman's Crede," a poem in the same metre, consisting of sixteen hundred and ninety-seven short lines, was composed after Wyclif's death (1384) by one of his followers. In reading it one is strongly reminded of the Puritan writers of the sixteenth century.

Thomas Occleve, a clerk in the Exchequer, flourished about the year 1410. His chief work is a version, in the seven-line stanza first employed by Chaucer, of the work of "Ægidius De Regimine Principum;" but far more interesting than the version itself is the long prologue prefixed to it, in which the poet tells us much about his own life and its troubles, and sings the praise of his great master Chaucer. The author describes his meeting with a poor old man, with whom he falls into conversation, and to whom at last he opens his griefs. After suggesting various causes for his despondency, the old man says, prettily: —

> "If thou fele the in any of thise y-greved,
> Or ellis what, tel on in Goddis name,
> Thou seest, al day the begger is releved,
> That syt and beggith, crokyd, blynd, and lame;
> And whi? for he ne lettith for no shame
> His harmes and his povert to bewreye
> To folke, as thei goon bi hym bi the weye.

After a long dialogue, the old man suggests that Occleve should write some poem, and send it to Prince Harry; to which the poet assents, while lamenting that his great counsellor is dead: —

> But wel away! so is mine hertè wo
> That the honour of English tonge is dede,
> Of which I wont was han counsel and rede!

O mayster dere, and fadir reverent,
My mayster Chaucer, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
O universal fadir in sciènce,
Alas that thou thine excellent prudence
In thy bed mortel mightest not bequethe!
What eyled Death? Alas! why would he sle the?

John Lydgate, a Benedictine monk of Bury St. Edmunds, who flourished about 1425, was also an admirer and imitator of Chaucer. He was, as a writer, less gifted than voluminous; Ritson, in his "Bibliographia Poetica," has enumerated two hundred and fifty-one of his productions; and this list is known to be incomplete. No writer was ever more popular in his own day; but it was a popularity which could not last. His versification is rough and inharmonious, as unlike as possible to the musical movement of Chaucer; his stories are prolix and dull, and his wit seldom very pointed. Instead of, like Chaucer, filling his ear, and feeding his imagination with the poetry of Italy, the only country where literature had as yet emerged from barbarism, and assumed forms comparable to those of antiquity, Lydgate's attention seems to have been engrossed partly by the inane Latin literature[1] of the period, partly by the works of the romance-writers and Trouvères, whose French was at that time a barbarous dialect, and whose rhythm was nearly as bad as his own. A selection from his minor poems was edited by Mr. Halliwell for the Percy Society in 1840. His longer works are, "The Storie of Thebes," translated from Statius; "The Falls of Princes" (translated from a French paraphrase of Boccaccio's work "De Casibus"); and "The History of the Siege of Troy." This last, a free version of Guido Colonna's Latin prose

[1] This expression refers to the miscellaneous literature, not, of course, to the theological or philosophical works written in Latin.

history, was undertaken at the command of Henry V. in 1412, and finished in 1420. "The Falls of Princes" are described by himself as a series of "Tragedies." All these three works are in the heroic rhyming measure.

Lydgate also translated from the French "The Daunce of Machabre," or "Dance of Death," in a curious octave stanza, of which the following is a specimen: —

"Owt of the Ffranche I drew it of entent
Not word by word, but following the substance,
And fro Parys to Englonde it sente,
Only of purposs yow to do plesaunce;
Rude of langage, — I was not borne in Ffraunce —
Have me excused; my name is John Lidgate,
Off here tunge I have no suffisaunce
Her corious metres in Englisshe to translate."

In this poem Death accosts first the pope, then the emperor, then the representatives of every earthly profession and calling in succession. Each of these replies in his turn; and all, with more or less of moralizing, own the levelling hand and irresistible might of Death. A poem called "Chichevache and Bycorne" has also been ascribed to him; he is the author, moreover, of a didactic poem in octosyllabics, of immense length, and never printed, to which a commentator of the sixteenth century has given the title "Reson and Sensuallyte;" its subject is the rivalry between reason and sense.

Among the minor poets of this period, there is none so well deserving of notice as Lawrence Minot, whose poems were accidentally discovered by Mr. Tyrrhwitt among the Cottonian MSS. in the British Museum, near the close of the last century. They celebrate the martial exploits of Edward III., from the battle of Halidon Hill in 1333, to the taking of Guisnes Castle in 1352, and would seem to have been composed contemporaneously with the events described. They are in the same stanza of six short lines, common among the romancers, in which Chaucer's "Rime of Sir Thopas" is written. Nothing is known of Minot's personal history.

Scottish Poets: Barbour, James I., Wynton.

John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, is the author of an heroic poem entitled "The Bruce,"[1] containing the history of Robert Bruce, the victor of Bannockburn, and of Scotland, so far as that was influenced by him. The poem is believed to have been completed in the year 1375. It is in the eight-syllable rhyming measure, and consists of between twelve and thirteen thousand lines. James I. of Scotland, who received his education while retained as a captive in England between the years 1405 and 1420, wrote his principal work, "The King's Quhair" (i.e., quire, or book), in praise of the lady who had won his heart, and whom he afterwards married, — the Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset. This poem, which is in a hundred and ninety-seven stanzas, divided into six cantos, contains much interesting matter of the autobiographical sort. Andrew Wynton, author of "The Originale Cronykil," was a canon of St. Andrew's, and prior of St. Serf's, the monastery on the island in Loch Leven. His "Cronykil" begins, as was then thought decorous and fitting, with the creation, plunges into the history of the angels, discusses general geography, and at the end of five books filled with this "pantographical" rubbish, as Dr. Irving amusingly calls it, settles down upon its proper subject, which is, the history of Scotland from the earliest ages down to his own time. He died about the year 1420. He incorporates freely the work of preceding writers, — three hundred lines from Barbour, and no less than thirty-six chapters by some versifier whose name, he says, he has not been able to discover. His verse is, like Barbour's, octosyllabic; it is *naïve*, sense-full, and, in parts, touching.[2]

[1] Irving's History of Scottish Poetry.

[2] See Critical Section, ch. i., Heroic Poetry.

Prose Writers: Maundevile, Chaucer, Wyclif.

The earliest known work in English prose of a secular character, "The Travels of Sir John Maundevile," dates from this period. As before mentioned, the book had been originally written in French, and afterwards translated into Latin. It was probably about the year 1360 that Sir John prepared and published an English version, also for the benefit of his own countrymen. This is a proof that about this time the knowledge of French, even among the educated classes, was ceasing to be essential or universal.

The author professes not only to have traversed the Holy Land in several directions, but to have visited many countries farther east, including even India; but, when we come to the chapters which treat of these countries, we find them filled with preposterous stories, which Maundevile, whose capacity of swallowing was unlimited, must have derived either from hearsay or from the works of travellers equally gullible with himself. When one reflects that Maundevile had as great opportunities as Herodotus, and then observes the use that he made of them, comparisons are forced on the mind not over-favorable to the English and mediæval, as contrasted with the Greek and classical, grade of intelligence. Our author tells of the "Land of Amazoym," an island inhabited only by a race of warlike women; of rocks of adamant in the Indian seas, which draw to them with irresistible force any ships sailing past that have any iron bolts or nails in them; of a tribe of people with hoofs like horses; of people with eight toes; of dwarfs; and of a one-legged race, whose one foot was so large that they used it to shade themselves from the sun with. The language, as used by Maundevile, appears almost precisely similar to that of Chaucer in his prose works. As a physician, Maunde-

vile belonged to a class of men not usually addicted to superstition, or overburdened with religious veneration; a trait which Chaucer, with his profound knowledge of mankind, hits off in his account of the "Doctor of Phisike:" —

"His studie was but litel on the Bible."

But the superstitious credulity of Maundevile is unbounded; nor did it tend to make his work unpopular. On the contrary, there is scarcely any old English book of which the manuscript copies are so numerous; and it is certain that it was held in high estimation all through the fifteenth century, — down, in fact, to the time when, foreign travel having become more common, the existence of the eight-toed men, &c., began to be doubted.

Chaucer's prose works consist of two of the "Canterbury Tales," — "The Tale of Melibæus," and "The Parson's Tale," — a translation of Boethius' "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," the "Astrolabie," and "The Testament of Love." "The Tale of Melibæus," the design of which is to enforce the duty of forgiveness of injuries, is one of those which are supposed to be told by the poet himself. "The Parson's Tale" is a treatise on the sacrament of penance. Both of these are written in fluent, intelligible English, and present few other difficulties to the reader but those which the old orthography occasions. In translating Boethius, Chaucer was renewing for the men of his own day the service rendered by Alfred to his West Saxon countrymen. "The Testament of Love" is divided into three parts. It professes to be an imitation of the work of Boethius. In the first part, Love bequeathes instructions to her followers, whereby they may rightly judge of the causes of cross fortune, &c. In the second, "she teacheth the

knowledge of one very God, our Creator; as also the state of grace, and the state of glory." Throughout these two parts are scattered allusions, or what seem to be such, to the circumstances under which Chaucer lost his official employment, and was reduced to poverty. The third part is a remarkable discourse on necessity and free will, in which the doctrine laid down by St. Augustine, and expounded by the schoolmen, is eloquently set forth. Of the "Astrolabie" we have already spoken (see p. 33).

Among Wyclif's English writings, his translation of the Bible must be first considered. The subject is surrounded with difficulties, and cannot be fully discussed here. A fine edition of the "Wycliffite versions of the Holy Scriptures" was issued in 1850, under the care of the Rev. J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden, from the Oxford University Press. In the preface to this work, the following passage occurs, and represents probably the real state of the case: —

"Down to the year 1360, the Psalter appears to be the only book of Scripture which had been entirely rendered into English. Within less than twenty-five years from this date, a prose version of the whole Bible, including as well the apocryphal as the canonical books, had been completed, and was in circulation among the people. For this invaluable gift England is indebted to John Wyclif. It may be impossible to determine with certainty the exact share which his own pen had in the translation; but there can be no doubt that he took a part in the labor of producing it, and that the accomplishment of the work must be attributed mainly to his zeal, encouragement, and direction."

The version here referred to is the older of the two

versions printed by Forshall and Madden. The later one appeared some years after Wyclif's death, being thought necessary by his Lollard followers on account of the inequality existing between different parts of the original work. However, the general agreement between the two versions is very close.

The other English writings of Wyclif consist of sermons, exegetical treatises, controversial treatises, and letters. A selection of these, edited by the present author, was published for the Clarendon Press in 1871.[1] The *sermons*, which are very short, are based upon the Gospels and Epistles read in the church service. The explanations of the New Testament parables are often racy and original; many curious traditional interpretations are given; and now and then, though it is but seldom, the tone rises to real eloquence. In the case of the other writings, interesting as many of them are, there is unfortunately much difficulty in distinguishing between those which are genuine and those which are more or less doubtful. The controversial tracts are directed chiefly against the four orders of friars, whose monasteries Wyclif called "Caym's (i.e., Cain's) castles." In a minor degree they assail the pope, the monks, and the higher orders of the secular clergy. Of one of the exegetical tracts, "On the Paternoster," a portion of the striking peroration is here subjoined: —

"Whanne a man seith, My God, delyvere me fro myn enemyes, what othir thing seith he than this, Delyvere us from yvel? And if thou rennest aboute bi alle the wordis of holy praieris, thou schalt fynde nothing whiche is not conteyned in this praier of the Lord. Whoevere seith a thing that may not perteyne to this praier of the Gospel, he praieth bodili and unjustli and unleeffulli, as me thenkith. Whanne a man saieth in his praier, Lord, multiplie myn richessis, and encreese myn honouris, and seith this, havynge the coveitise of hem, and not purposynge the profit of hem to men, to be bettir to Godward, I gesse that he may not fynde it in the Lordis praier. Therfore be it schame to aske the thingis whiche it is not leefful to coveyte. If a man schameth not of this, but coveytise overcometh him, this is askid, that he delyvere fro this yvel of coveytise, to whom we seyn, Delyvere us from yvel."

[1] Select English Works of John Wyclif. Oxford, 1871.

CHAPTER III.

REVIVAL OF LEARNING.

1450–1558.

M. SISMONDI, in his admirable work on the Literature of the South of Europe, has a passage,[1] explaining the decline of Italian literature in the fifteenth century, which is so strictly applicable to the corresponding decline of English literature for a hundred and seventy years after Chaucer, that we cannot forbear quoting it:—

"The century which, after the death of Petrarch, had been devoted by the Italians to the study of antiquity, during which literature experienced no advance, and the Italian language seemed to retrograde, was not, however, lost to the powers of imagination. Poetry, on its first revival, had not received sufficient nourishment. The fund of knowledge, of ideas, and of images, which she called to her aid, was too restricted. The three great men of the fourteenth century, whom we first presented to the attention of the reader, had, by the sole force of their genius, attained a degree of erudition, and a sublimity of thought, far beyond the spirit of their age. These qualities were entirely personal; and the rest of the Italian bards, like the Provençal poets, were reduced, by the poverty of their

[1] Vol. ii. p. 400 (Roscoe).

ideas, to have recourse to those continual attempts at wit, and to that mixture of unintelligible ideas and incoherent images, which render the perusal of them so fatiguing. The whole of the fifteenth century was employed in extending in every direction the knowledge and resources of the friends of the Muses. Antiquity was unveiled to them in all its elevated characters, — its severe laws, its energetic virtue, and its beautiful and engaging mythology; in its subtle and profound philosophy, its overpowering eloquence, and its delightful poetry. Another age was required to knead afresh the clay for the formation of a nobler race. At the close of the century, a divine breath animated the finished statue, and it started into life."

Mutatis mutandis, those eloquent sentences are exactly applicable to the case of English literature. Chaucer's eminence was purely personal; even more so, perhaps, than that of the great Italians. For the countrymen of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio at least possessed a settled and beautiful language, adapted already to nearly all literary purposes; while the tongue of Chaucer was in so rude and unformed a condition that only transcendent genius could make a work expressed through it endurable. The fifteenth century seems to have been an age of active preparation in every country of Europe. Though no great books were produced in it, it witnessed the invention of the art of printing, the effect of which was so to multiply copies of the masterpieces of Greek and Roman genius, to reduce their price, and to enlarge the circle of their readers, as to supply abundantly new materials for thought, and new models of artistic form, and thus pave the way for the great writers of the close of the next century. Printing, invented at Metz by Guten-

berg about the year 1450, was introduced into England by William Caxton in 1474. The zealous patronage of two enlightened noblemen, Lord Worcester and Lord Rivers, greatly aided him in his enterprise. This century was also signalized by the foundation of many schools and colleges, in which the founders desired that the recovered learning of antiquity should be uninterruptedly and effectually cultivated. Eton, the greatest of the English schools, and King's College at Cambridge, were founded by Henry VI., between 1440 and 1450. Three new universities arose in Scotland, — that of St. Andrew's in 1410, of Glasgow in 1450, of Aberdeen in 1494; all under the express authority of different popes. Three or four unsuccessful attempts were made in the course of this and the previous century, — the latest in 1496, — to establish a university in Dublin. Several colleges were founded at Oxford and Cambridge in the reign of Henry VIII., among which we may specify Christ Church, the largest college at the former university, which, however, was originally planned by the magnificent Wolsey on a far larger scale, and the noble foundation of Trinity College, Cambridge.

In the period now before us our attention will be directed to three subjects, — the poets, whether English or Scotch, the state and progress of learning, and the prose-writers. The manner in which the great and complex movement of the Reformation influenced for good or evil the development of literature, is too wide a subject to be fully considered here. Something, however, will be said under this head, when we come to sketch the rise of the "new learning," or study of the humanities, in England, and inquire into the causes of its fitful and intermittent growth.

Poetry: Hardyng, Hawes, Skelton, Surrey, Wyat, first Poet Laureate.

The poets of this period, at least on the English side of the border, were of small account. The middle of the fifteenth century witnessed the expulsion of the English from France; and a time of national humiliation is unfavorable to the production of poetry. If, indeed, humiliation become permanent, and involve subjection to the stranger, the plaintive wailings of the elegiac Muse are naturally evoked; as we see in the instances of Ireland and Wales. But where a nation is merely disgraced, not crushed, it keeps silence, and waits for a better day. For more than thirty years after the loss of the French provinces, England was distracted and weakened by the civil wars of the Roses. This was also a time unfavorable to poetry, the makers of which then and long afterwards depended on the patronage of the noble and wealthy, — a patronage which in that time of fierce passions, alternate suffering, and universal disquietude, was not likely to be steadily maintained. Why the fifty years which followed the victory of Bosworth should have been so utterly barren of good poetry, it is less easy to see. All that can be said is, that this was an age of preparation, in which men disentombed and learned to appreciate old treasures, judging that they were much better employed than in attempting to produce new matter, with imperfect means and models. Towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII. were produced the "Songs and Sonnettes" of the friends Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyat; and Sackville wrote the induction to the "Mirrour for Magistrates," in the last year of Mary.

Scotland seems to have been about a century later than England in arriving at the stage of literary culture which Chaucer and his contemporaries illustrate.

Several poets of no mean order arose in that country during the period now in question. Of some of these, namely, Dunbar, Gawain Douglas, Lyndsay, and Henryson, we shall presently have to make particular mention.

John Hardyng was in early life an esquire to Harry Percy, commonly called Hotspur. After seeing his lord fall on the field of Shrewsbury, he took service with Sir Robert Umfravile, and remained till his death a dependant on that family. He wrote, in that common seven-line stanza which we have called the "Chaucerian heptastich," a "Chronicle of Britain," which comes down to 1462, ending with an address to Edward IV., urging him to be merciful to the Lancastrians, and to make just allowance for previous circumstances.

Stephen Hawes, groom of the chamber to Henry VII., wrote, among other poems, "The Pastime of Pleasure," a narrative allegory like "The Romance of the Rose," "The Vision of Piers Plowman," and so many other favorite poems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This work is the seven-line stanza so much employed by Chaucer. The versification has little of the smoothness and music of the great master; it is rough and untunable, like that of Lydgate. Hawes must have died after the year 1509, since we have among his poems a coronation ode celebrating the accession of Henry VIII. John Skelton, a secular priest, studied at both universities, and had a high reputation for scholarship in the early part of the sixteenth century. It is certain that his Latin verses are much superior to his serious attempts in English. A long rambling elegy in the seven-line stanza on Henry, fourth Earl of Northumberland, murdered in 1489, will be found in Percy. The versification is even worse than that of Hawes. In Skelton's satires there is a naturalness and a humor which make them still readable. Two of these, entitled, "Speke, Parrot," and

"Why come ye not to Court?" contain vigorous but coarse attacks on Cardinal Wolsey, to escape from whose wrath Skelton had to take sanctuary at Westminster, and afterwards was protected by Bishop Islip till his death in 1529. He is particularly fond of short six-syllable lines, which some have named from him, "Skeltonical verse." Here is a short specimen, taken from "Phyllyp Sparowe," a strange rambling elegy upon a favorite sparrow, belonging to a nun, which had been killed by a cat: —

"O cat of carlyshe kinde,
The fynde was in thy mynde
When thou my byrde untwynde!
I wold thou haddest ben blynde!
The leopardes sauvage,
The lyons in theyr rage,
Myght catche thé in theyr pawes,
And gnawe thé in theyr jawes!
The serpentes of Lybany
Myght stynge thé venymously!
The dragones with their tongues
Myght poison thy lyver and longes!
The mantycors of the montaynes
Myght fede them on thy braynes!" &c.

Skelton is also the author of a moral play, called "Magnyfycence," an inane production of between two and three thousand lines, in the same rough "Saturnian" metre in which, as we shall see, the first known English comedy, by Udall, was composed. There is no division into acts, only into scenes; the characters are mere abstractions, such as Felycyte, Liberte, Measure, Fansy, Foly, &c. His comedy of "Achademios," enumerated by himself among his works in the "Garland of Laurell," appears to have perished: should it ever come to light, it might possibly take from "Ralph Roister Doister" the distinction of being the earliest English comedy.[1] Alexander Bar-

[1] See Skelton's works, carefully edited by Mr. Dyce, 1843.

clay, chaplain at the College of St. Mary Ottery, in Devonshire, is known as the translator, with additions, of Sebastian Brandt's German poem of the "Ship of Fools," a satire upon society in general.

Far above these barbarous rhymers rose the poetic genius of Surrey. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, son of the victor of Flodden, was born about the year 1516. At the age of sixteen he was contracted in marriage to the Lady Frances Vere. His Geraldine, to whom so many of his sonnets are addressed, was a daughter of the Earl of Kildare. She slighted his passion; and the rejected lover carried the fiery ardor of his spirit into the scenes of war and diplomacy. Having committed some errors in the conduct of the campaign in France in 1546, he was thrown into prison by order of the "jealous, ruthless tyrant"[1] who then sat on the throne, brought to trial on a trumpery charge of high treason, and beheaded in January, 1547, a few days before Henry's death. His "Songes and Sonnettes," together with those of Wyat, were first published in 1557. His translation of the second and fourth books of the Æneid is the earliest specimen of blank verse in the language.

Sir Thomas Wyat the elder, a native of Kent, was much employed by Henry VIII. on diplomatic missions; and over-exertion in one of these occasioned his early death in 1541. The improvement in grace and polish of style which distinguishes Surrey and Wyat in comparison with their predecessors was unquestionably due to Italian influences. The very term "sonnet," by them first introduced, is taken from the Italian "sonetto." Puttenham, in his "Art of Poesie" (1589), says of them, that "having travelled into Italie, and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style

[1] Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," canto vi.

of the Italian poesie, as novises newly crept out of the school of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English metre and style." He reputes them for "the chief lanternes of light," to all subsequent English poets. "Their conceits were lofty, their style stately, their conveyance cleanly, their termes proper, their metre sweet and well-proportioned; in all imitating very naturally and studiously their master, Francis Petrarch."

But this praise is too unqualified. Surrey's translation of Virgil is as bald and repulsive a version as can well be. Of his famous love poems in honor of Geraldine, nine are written in a metre so absurd (alternate twelve and fourteen syllable lines) that it would spoil the effect of far better matter; and the unchanging querulous whine which characterizes the whole series renders it tedious reading. In truth, notwithstanding the senseless encomiums which Dr. Nott lavished on his favorite author, the gems in Surrey are but few, and may be counted on one's fingers. The sonnets beginning "Give place, ye lovers," "The sote season," and "Set me whereas," [1] nearly exhaust the list.

Of the poems of Wyat a large proportion are translated or imitated from the Italian. They relate almost entirely to love, and sometimes attain to a polish and a grace which English verse had not before exhibited. Of this the reader may in some degree judge from the passage quoted further on.[2]

To this period rather than to the next, since a portion of it was in type in the year 1555, belongs the extensive poetical work — meritorious in many ways, but inadequate in point of execution to the vastness of the design — entitled the "Myrroure for Magistrates." Lydgate's "Falls of Princes," translated from Boccaccio, was reprinted in 1554, and well received by the public. The printer desired that the work should be continued from the date at which Boccaccio

[1] See p. 438. [2] Ibid.

left off, and devoted to the "tragical histories" of famous Englishmen exclusively. William Baldwin agreed, if sufficiently aided by other writers, to undertake the work. Owing to difficulties connected with the censorship, the book did not appear till 1559; in this its primitive shape it contained nineteen legends, of which twelve were by Baldwin himself, the rest being written by his friends Ferrers, Phaier, Chaloner, and others. The first legend was that of Tressilian, one of Richard II.'s judges, executed by Gloucester's faction in 1388. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich. Copious moralizing is the leading characteristic of the whole work. This note was just suited to the serious, self-inspecting, somewhat melancholy temper of the English mind; and numerous redactions of the poem, the latest of which appeared in 1610, attest its remarkable popularity. Sackville's beautiful "Induction," with the legend of the Duke of Buckingham who was beheaded in 1521, first appeared in the edition of 1563. The original design, which was merely to continue Boccaccio, was soon departed from; and a number of legends were added, which carried back this "history teaching by biography" to the fabulous age of the British kings. One great redaction and re-arrangement was effected by John Higgins in his edition of 1587; another by Richard Niccols in the crowning edition of 1610. In this last no fewer than ninety legends are contained; among which one — the finest perhaps in the whole work — is the legend of Thomas Cromwell by Michael Drayton.[1]

The earliest mention of a poet-laureate *eo nomine* occurs in the reign of Edward IV., by whom John Kaye was appointed to that office.[2] We read of a king's versifier (*versificator*) as far back as 1251. The change of title admits of a probable explanation. The solemn crowning of Petrarch on the Capitol, in the year 1341, made a profound sensation through all literary circles in Europe. Chaucer, as we have seen, distinguishes Petrarch as "the *laureat* poete." In the next century we find the dignity of *poeta laureatus* forming one of the recognized degrees at our universities, and conferred upon proof being given by the candidate of proficiency in grammar, rhetoric, and versification. It is

[1] See Mr. Haslewood's edition of "The Mirrour for Magistrates," 1815.

[2] Hazlitt's Johnson's Lives, article Kaye.

impossible not to connect this practice of laureation with the world-famous tribute rendered by the Romans to the genius of Petrarch. After the institution of the degree, it is easy to understand that the king would select his poet among the *poetæ laureati*, and that the modest title of *versificator* would be dropped.

Scottish Poets: Henryson, Dunbar, Gawain Douglas, Lyndsay, Blind Harry.

The present work does not pretend to trace the history of Scottish poetry; but, in the dearth of genius in England during this period, the rise of several admirable poets in the sister country demands our attention. The earliest of these, Robert Henryson, appears to have died about the end of the fifteenth century. His longest poem, "The Testament of Faire Creseyde," a sort of supplement to Chaucer's "Troilus and Creseyde," was printed by Urry, in his edition of that poet. The pastoral, called "Robin and Makyne," is given in Percy's "Reliques." The pith of the story is exactly that which we find in Burns's "Duncan Gray," only that in Henryson's poem the parts are reversed; it is the lady who first makes love in vain, and then, growing indifferent, is vainly wooed by the shepherd who has repented of his coldness. "The Abbey Walk" is a beautiful poem of reflection, the moral of which is, the duty and wisdom of submitting humbly to the will of God in all things.

William Dunbar, the greatest of the old Scottish poets, was a native of East Lothian, and born about the middle of the fifteenth century. He studied at the University of St. Andrew's, perhaps also at Oxford. In early life he entered the novitiate of the Franciscan order, but does not appear to have taken the vows. James IV. attached him by many favors to his person

and court, where we have certain evidence of his having lived from 1500 to 1513, the date of Flodden. After that fatal day, on which his royal patron perished, his name vanishes from the Scottish records; and it is merely a loose conjecture which assigns his death to about the year 1520.

Dunbar's most perfect poem is "The Thistle and the Rose,"[1] written in 1503 to commemorate the nuptials of James IV., and Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich, invented, as we have seen, by Chaucer, and employed by all his successors down to Spenser inclusive. The versification is most musical, — superior to that of any poet before Spenser except Chaucer, and better than much of his. The influence, both direct and indirect, of the father of our poetry, is visible, not in this poem alone, but throughout the works of the school of writers now under consideration. The poet, according to the approved mediæval usage, falls asleep and has a dream, in which May — the "faire frische May" in which Chaucer so delighted — appears to him, and commands him to attend her into a garden, and do homage to the flowers, the birds, and the sun. Nature is then introduced, and commands that the progress of the spring shall no longer be checked by ungenial weather. Neptune and Æolus give the necessary orders. Then Nature, by her messengers, summons all organized beings before her, the beasts by the roe, the birds by the swallow, the flowers by the *yarrow*. The lion is crowned king of the beasts, the eagle of the birds, and the thistle of the flowers. The Rose, the type of beauty, is wedded to the Thistle, the type of strength, who is commanded well to cherish and guard his Rose. Such is an outline of the plot of this beautiful and graceful poem.

[1] See Critical Section, chap. i., Allegories.

"The design of 'The Golden Terge'" — another allegoric poem — "is to show the gradual and imperceptible influence of love when too far indulged over reason."[1] This poem is in a curious nine-line stanza, having only two rhymes. But Dunbar excelled also in comic and satirical composition. "The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins" is a production of this kind, the humor, dash, and broad Scotch of which remind one strongly of Burns. The metre is that of Chaucer's "Sir Topas." Some Highlanders are introduced at the end, and receive very disrespectful mention: —

"Thae turmagantis[2] with tag and tatter
Full loud in Ersche [Erse] begout to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke.[3]
The devil sa devit[4] was with thair yell
That in the deepest pit of hell
He smorit them with smoke."

Gawain Douglas, sprung from a noble family, studied at the University of Paris, and rose to be bishop of Dunkeld. After Flodden field, the regent Albany drove him from Scotland. Coming into England, he was hospitably received by Henry, who allowed him a liberal pension. He died in London of the plague, in 1521. He is chiefly known for a translation of the Æneid into heroic verse, which is the earliest English version on record, having been published in 1513. The prologues prefixed to the several books have great poetic beauty; and the language presents little more difficulty than that of Chaucer. The concluding lines of one of these prologues are subjoined as a specimen: they are part of an address to the sun: —

[1] Warton.
[2] Ptarmigan; to a covey of which he compares the Highlanders.
[3] "Chattered hoarsely" is Warton's explanation.
[4] Deafened.

"Welcum the birdis beild[1] upon the brere,
Welcum maister and reulare of the yere,
Welcum walefare of husbandis at the plewis,
Welcum reparare of woodis, treis, and bewis.[2]
Welcum depaynter of the blomyt medis,
Welcum the lyffe of every thing that spredis,
Welcum storare[3] of all kynd bestial,
Welcum be thy bricht bemes gladand al."

Sir David Lyndsay was a satirist of great power and boldness. He is the Jean de Meun[4] of the sixteenth century; but, as a layman and a knight, he levels his satire with even greater directness and impartiality than that extraordinary ecclesiastic. In his allegorical satire entitled "The Dreme," the poet is conducted by Remembrance, first to the infernal regions, which he finds peopled with churchmen of every grade, then to Purgatory, then through the "three elements" to the seven planets in their successive spheres, then beyond them to the empyrean and the celestial abodes. The poetical topography is, without doubt, borrowed from Dante. He is then transported back to earth, and visits Paradise; whence by a "very rapid transition," as Warton calls it, he is taken to Scotland, where he meets "Johne the comounweill," who treats him to a long general satire on the corrupt state of that kingdom. After this, the poet is in the usual manner brought back to the cave by the seaside, where he falls asleep, and wakes up from his dream. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich. There is prefixed to the poem an exhortation in ten stanzas, addressed to King James V., in which advice and warning are conveyed with unceremonious plainness. Among Lyndsay's remaining poems, the most important is "The Monarchie," an account of the

[1] Shelter. [2] Boughs. [3] Restorer.

[4] Author of the continuation of the Roman de la Rose, the caustic cynicism of which is almost incredible. See p. 31.

most famous monarchies that have flourished in the world, commencing with the creation of man, and ending with the day of judgment. This poem, which is for the most part in the common romance metre, or eight-syllable couplet, runs over with satire and invective. Lyndsay's powerful attacks on the Scottish clergy, the state of which at that time unfortunately afforded but too much ground for them, are said to have hastened the religious war in Scotland.

At the very beginning of this period, or about 1460, Blind Harry, or Harry the Minstrel, produced his poem on the adventures of Wallace. Considered as the composition of a blind man, "The Wallace" is a remarkable production; considered as a work of art, a more execrable poem perhaps was never composed. Yet national resentment and partiality have made the Scotch, from the fifteenth century down to the present time, delight in this tissue of lies and nonsense. A modernized version of it was a horn-book among the peasantry in the last century. Scottish critics, one and all, speak of its poetical beauties; and even one or two English writers, "carried away by their dissimulation," have professed to find much in it to admire. It is written in the heroic rhyming couplet, and professes to be founded on a Latin chronicle by John Blair, a contemporary of Wallace; but as no such chronicle exists, nor is anywhere alluded to as existing, it is probable that the whole story is a pure invention of the minstrel's. That a poem which makes of Wallace a Scottish "Jack the giant-killer," killing and maiming innumerable Englishmen upon every possible occasion, should satisfy the intellectual appetite of a Lowland peasant, whom household tradition has nurtured up in feelings of anti-English prejudice that once had too real a justification, is easily intelligible; but that is no reason why men of sense

and education should indorse a popular estimate which it is impossible that they themselves can share. If there were an "Early Scottish Text" society, "The Wallace" would doubtless form a fitting subject for its attentions, but, considered within the sphere of literature, it is desirable that its utter worthlessness should be as much recognized in Scotland as that of Addison's "Campaign," and many other compositions more patriotic than poetical, has long been amongst ourselves.[1]

The language of all these Scottish writers in their serious compositions closely resembles the English of their contemporaries south of the Tweed; the chief difference consisting in certain dialectic peculiarities, such as the use of "quh" for "wh," and of "it" and "and" for "ed" and "ing," in the terminations of the past and present participles. But in proportion as they resort to comic expression, and attach their satire to particular places or persons, their language becomes less English, and slides into the rough vernacular of their ordinary speech. Exactly the same thing is observable in Burns's poetry.

Learning: Grocyn, Colet, the Humanities, State of the Universities.

The fifteenth century was, as we have said, pre-eminently an age of accumulation, assimilation, and preparation.

The first two-thirds of the sixteenth century fall under the same general description. England had to bring herself up to the intellectual level of the Continent, and to master the treasures of literature and philosophy which the revival and diffusion of Greek, and partly of Roman learning, had placed within her reach, before

[1] For a full account of Blind Harry, see Irving's History of Scottish Poetry, p. 174.

her writers could attempt to rival the fame of the great ancients. There is much interest in tracing in detail the numerous minute steps and individual acts which helped on this process. Many such are related by Wood in his "Athenæ Oxonienses." Thus we are told that the first man who publicly taught Greek at Oxford was William Grocyn. Stapleton, a Roman Catholic writer of the age of Elizabeth, says, "Recens tunc ex Italiâ venerat Grocinus, qui primus in eâ ætate Græcas literas in Angliam invexerat, Oxoniique publice professus fuerat." Of course Grocyn had to go abroad to get this new learning. Born about 1450, and educated at Oxford, he travelled on the Continent about the year 1488, and studied both at Rome and Florence. Greek learning flourished then at Florence more than at any place in Europe, owing to the fact that Lorenzo de Medici had eagerly welcomed to his court many illustrious and learned refugees, who, subsequently to the fall of Constantinople, had been forced to seek shelter from the violence and intolerance of the Mussulmans in Western Europe. One of these learned Byzantines, Demetrius Chalcocondyles, together with the Italian Angelo Politian, afforded to Grocyn by their public instructions those opportunities which he had left his country to search for, — of penetrating into the sanctuary of classical antiquity, and drinking in at the fountain-head the inspirations of a national genius whose glories no lapse of time can obscure. Gibbon,[1] with his usual fulness of learning and wonderful mastery of style, has thus sketched the features of this eventful time: —

"The genius and education of Lorenzo rendered him not only a patron, but a judge and candidate, in the literary race. In his palace, distress was entitled to relief, and merit to reward; his leisure hours were

[1] Decline and Fall, chap. lxvi.

delightfully spent in the Platonic academy; he encouraged the emulation of Demetrius Chalcocondyles and Angelo Politian; and his active missionary, Janus Lascaris, returned from the East with a treasure of two hundred manuscripts, fourscore of which were as yet unknown in the libraries of Europe. The rest of Italy was animated by a similar spirit, and the progress of the nation repaid the liberality of her princes. The Latins held the exclusive property of their own literature; and these disciples of Greece were soon capable of transmitting and improving the lessons which they had imbibed. After a short succession of foreign teachers, the tide of emigration subsided. But the language of Constantinople was spread beyond the Alps; and the natives of France, Germany, and England imparted to their countrymen the sacred fire which they had kindled in the schools of Florence and Rome." After noticing the spirit of imitation which long prevailed, he continues, "Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded; nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate, the works of his predecessors."

But to return to Grocyn, whose visit to Florence occasioned this quotation. When settled in Oxford again, about the year 1490, he opened his budget, and taught Greek to all comers. Among his hearers was a youth of much promise, from London, known afterwards to his own and later ages as Sir Thomas More.

Thomas Linacre, the celebrated physician, was in residence and giving lectures at Oxford about the same time. He, too, had studied in Italy, chiefly at Florence and Rome, and had become an accomplished Greek scholar. It is to him that we owe the first version of any Greek author made by an Englishman. This was a Latin translation, published in 1499, of the *Sphæra* of Proclus, an astronomical

treatise. Linacre also translated into Latin the works of the old Greek physician Galen, and was the leading spirit in the knot of enlightened men who founded the College of Physicians (1518).

Another active patron of the new learning was Dean Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School, and the friend of Erasmus. He, too, had travelled extensively, and observed admiringly. He had remarked how Lorenzo de Medici labored to build up a sort of Utopia of intelligence and refinement, made beautiful by art, and governed by wisdom; and it seems that in these rougher northern climates he had some design of reproducing a faint resemblance of the gardens of Bellosguardo. On the lands of his monastery at Sheen, near Richmond, he built himself, long before his death, a magnificent mansion, whither, he said, he designed to retire in his old age, and amid a circle of intellectual friends enjoy the sweets of a philosophical and lettered ease.[1] This was a Pagan, rather than a Christian ideal. It shows how far the contact with the genius of antiquity intoxicated the spirit even of a thoroughly good man: how disturbing, then, must have been its effects upon men of lower character!

In this age of strange excitement, when a new world, supposed to teem with wealth, had just been discovered in the West, when by the invention of printing thoughts were communicated and their records multiplied with a speed which must then have seemed marvellous, and when the astronomical theory of Copernicus was revolutionizing men's ideas as to the very fundamental relations between the earth and the heavens, unsettling those even whom it did not convince, there was a temporary forgetfulness on the part of many, even in the Christian Church, that this life, dignify it as you may, is, after all, a scene of trial, not of triumph, and that, if

[1] Flanagan's Church History, vol. ii. p. 11.

Christianity be true, suffering is on earth a higher state than enjoyment, and poverty in one sense preferable to wealth. The Reformers seized on this weak point then noticeable in many of the clergy, and made out of it, to use a modern phrase, abundant controversial capital. Human learning, they said — Luther himself originated the cry — was a waste of time, as well as a dangerous snare; art was a mere pandering to the passions. Sinful man should be engrossed but by one pursuit, the pursuit of salvation; should study only one book, and that the Bible. When the party that favored the Reformation came into power under Edward VI., this spirit operated with prejudicial effect on the young plants of learning and culture which had begun to spring up at our universities. To take one well-known instance: the ecclesiastical commissioners of Edward, in their visitation to Oxford, destroyed or removed a valuable collection, impossible to be replaced, of six hundred manuscripts of the classical authors, presented by Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester, uncle of Henry VI., to that university. The Roman Catholic hierarchy also, among whom, as in the case of Nicholas V. and Leo X., some of the most intelligent and zealous promoters of the new learning had been found, saw reason, about the middle of the sixteenth century, to change their tactics. In England, at any rate, we know that the bishops, under Queen Mary, discouraged the study of the humanities, and attempted to revive in their place the old scholastic exercises and disputations. The reformers immediately — with some inconsistency, it must be confessed — set up the cry, "You are trying to shut out enlightenment, to set up the barbarous scholastic in preference to the Ciceronian Latinity. You are enemies of progress, of civilization, of the enlargement of the mind."

This point will be illustrated presently. In connection with the spread of learning in England, the name of Cardinal Wolsey must not be omitted. Shakspeare has described his services in language that cannot be amended : [1] —

> " This Cardinal,
> Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly
> Was fashioned to much honor from his cradle.
> He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;
> Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading;
> Lofty and sour to them that loved him not,
> But, to those men that sought him, sweet as summer,
> And though he were unsatisfied in getting
> (Which was a sin), yet in bestowing, madam,
> He was most princely. Ever witness for him
> Those twins of learning, that he raised in you,
> Ipswich and Oxford: one of which fell with him,
> Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;
> The other,[2] though unfinished, yet so famous,
> So excellent in art, and still so rising,
> That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue."

Cambridge soon followed the example of Oxford in introducing the study of Greek. Towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII., Sir John Cheke and Sir Thomas Smith are mentioned in the annals of that university as having been especially active in promoting this study. Milton refers to this in one of his sonnets : —

> " Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir Johh Cheke,
> Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
> When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek."

The sense of insecurity induced among all classes by Henry's tyranny in his later years, and the social con-

[1] Henry VIII., Act iv. Scene 2.

[2] Christ Church, which Wolsey intended to have founded on a far grander even than its present scale, and to have named Cardinal College.

fusion which prevailed in the following reign, interrupted the peaceful flow of learned studies. The universities appear to have been sunk in a lower depth of inefficiency and ignorance about the year 1550 than ever before or since. Under Mary, Cardinal Pole, the legate, was personally favorable to the new learning. Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford, consulted him on the framing of the college statutes, in which it was provided that Greek should form one of the subjects of instruction. In his legatine constitutions, passed at a synod held in 1555, Pole ordered that all archbishops and bishops, as well as holders of benefices in general, should assign a stated portion of their revenues to the support of cathedral schools in connection with every metropolitan and cathedral church throughout the kingdom, into which lay scholars of respectable parentage were to be admitted, together with theological students. These cathedral schools were kept up in the following reign, and seem to have attained considerable importance. But one enlightened and generous mind could not restrain the re-actionary violence of the Gardiners and the Bonners. Under their management a system of obscurantism was attempted, if not established, at the universities; the Greek poets and philosophers were to be banished, and scholasticism was to reign once more in the schools. Ascham, in his "Schoolmaster," thus describes the state of things: —

"The love of good learning began suddenly to wax cold; the knowledge of the tongues was manifestly contemned; yea, I know that heads were cast together, and counsel devised, that Duns, with all the rabble of barbarous questionists, should have dispossessed of their place and room Aristotle, Plato, Tully, and Demosthenes, whom good Mr. Redman, and those two worthy stars

of that university, Cheke and Smith, with their scholars, had brought to flourish as notably in Cambridge as ever they did in France and in Italy."

Prose Writers.

Although no prose work produced during this period can be said to hold a place in our standard literature, considerable progress was made in fitting the rough and motley native idiom for the various requirements of prose composition. Through the truly national work of the publication of our early records, which has now been going on for many years under the superintendence of the Master of the Rolls, a curious book, dating from the early part of this period, has been made generally accessible. This is "The Repressor" of Reginald Pecock, Bishop of St. Asaph. The modern editor of the work, Mr. Babington, calls it, probably with justice, "the earliest piece of good philosophical disquisition of which our English prose literature can boast." Pecock was a Welshman; he was born about the end of the fourteenth century, and educated at Oriel College, Oxford. After his appointment to the see of St. Asaph, he took the line of vehement opposition to the teaching of the Lollards, the followers of Wyclif. The design of "The Repressor," which was first published in a complete shape about the year 1456, was to justify certain practices, or "governances" as he calls them, then firmly established in the Church, which the Lollards vehemently declaimed against; such as the use of images, pilgrimages to famous shrines, the holding of landed estates by the clergy, &c. Pecock was made Bishop of Chichester in 1450. His method of argument, however, which consisted in appealing rather to reason and common-sense than to Church authority, to justify the practices complained of, was displeasing to

most of his brother bishops; and in 1457 his books were formally condemned in a synod held before Henry VI. at Westminster. He was deposed from his bishopric, and only escaped severer treatment by making a full and formal retractation of his opinions.

The most interesting work belonging to this period is Sir John Fortescue's treatise on "The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy." The author was chief justice of the Court of King's Bench in the time of Henry VI. He was at first a zealous Lancastrian; he fought at Towton, and was taken prisoner at Tewkesbury in 1471, after which he was attainted. But upon the death of Henry in that year, leaving no son, Fortescue admitted the legality of the claim of the house of York, and thereby obtained the reversal of the attainder. The title of the work mentioned is not very appropriate: it should rather be, "A Treatise on the Best Means of raising a Revenue for the King, and cementing his Power." These, at least, are the points prominently handled. The opening chapters drawing a contrast between the state and character of the English peasantry under the constitutional crown of England, and those of the French peasantry under the absolute monarchy of France, are full of acute remarks and curious information. It is instructive to notice, that Fortescue (chap. xii.) speaks of England's insular position as a source of *weakness*, because it laid her open to attack on every side. The observation reminds us how modern a creation is the powerful British navy, the wooden walls of which have turned that position into our greatest safeguard. This work is in excellent English, and, if freed from the barbarous orthography in which it is disguised, could be read with ease and pleasure at the present day. Fortescue wrote also, about the year 1463, an excellent

Latin treatise, "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ," designed for the use of the ill-fated Edward Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI. and Margaret, in which he labors to prove the superiority of the common law of England to the civil law. No other prose writer of the fifteenth century deserves notice, unless we except Caxton, who wrote a continuation of Trevisa's translation of the "Polychronicon" to the year 1460, and printed the entire work in 1482. The first work printed in England is believed to have been "The Game and Play of the Chesse," a moral treatise, translated by Caxton from the French, and turned out by his printing-press in 1474. He also printed a translation, made by himself from the German, of the famous mediæval apologue or satire of "Renard the Fox." For some eighteen years he continued with untiring industry to bring out popular works, chiefly religious or moral treatises and romances, from the press; and, when he died, he left able successors to carry on and extend his work.[1]

The effect of the revival of ancient learning was, for a long time, to induce our ablest literary men to aim at a polished Latin style, rather than endeavor to improve their native tongue. Erasmus wished that Latin should be the common literary language of Europe: he always wrote in it himself, and held what he termed the barbarous jargon of his Dutch fatherland in utter detestation. So Leland, More, and Pole composed, if not all, yet their most important and most carefully written works in Latin. John Leland the famous antiquary, to whose "Itinerarium" we owe so much interesting topographical and sociological information for the period immediately following the destruction of the monasteries, is the author of a number of Latin elegies, in

[1] For fuller particulars about Caxton, see "The History of English Literature," by the late learned Prof. Craik of Belfast.

various metres, upon the death of Sir Thomas Wyat the elder, which evince no common elegance and mastery over the language. More's "Utopia," published in 1516, was composed in Latin, but has been translated by Burnet and others.

Utopia, according to its Greek derivation (*οὐ, not; τόπος, place*) means the "Land of Nowhere." The manners and customs of the Utopians are described to More and his friend Tonstall, while on a mission in Flanders, by an "ancient mariner," named Raphael Hythlodaye, who has visited their island. The work is a satire on existing society. Every important political or social regulation in Utopia is the reverse of what was then to be found in Europe. The condition of the ideal commonwealth rebukes the ambition of kings, the worldliness of priests, and the selfish greed of private persons. The Utopians detest war, and will only take up arms on a plain call of honor or justice. Instead of burning and torturing men for their religion, they tolerate all forms of belief or no-belief, only refusing to those who deny Divine Providence, and the soul's immortality, the right to hold public offices or trusts. They have no money, but the wants of all are fully supplied by the perfect mechanism of their free government; equality prevails among them, and is highly prized; idlers are driven out of the commonwealth; and the lands belonging to each city, incapable of appropriation to private owners, are tilled by all its citizens in succession.

More's English writings are, "A History of the Life and Reign of Edward V.,"[1] written about 1513, a collection of letters, and several controversial tracts in reply to Tyndale and other English reformers.

The regular series of English prose chronicles commences in this period. The earliest is "The Chronicle of England," by John Capgrave, who dedicated the work to Edward IV. It opens with the creation of the world, and comes down to 1416. It appeared about the year 1463, but was never printed till it came out in the Rolls Series. Robert Fabyan was an alderman and sheriff of London in the reign of Henry VII.; his "Concordance of Storyes," giving the history of England from the

[1] See p. 487.

fabulous Brutus to the year 1485, was published after the author's death in 1516. Successive subsequent editions of this work continued the history to 1559. Edward Hall, an under-sheriff of London, wrote in 1542 a chronicle entitled, "The Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York," bringing the narrative down to 1532. Richard Grafton, himself the author of two independent chronicles in the reign of Elizabeth, printed in 1548 a new edition of Hall, with a continuation to the end of Henry's reign. A curious biographical work, "Illustrium Majoris Britanniæ Scriptorum Summarium," was written by John Bale, a reformer, afterwards Bishop of Ossory, in 1548. The accuracy of this writer may be judged of by the fact, that, in the article on Chaucer, he fixes the date of the poet's death in 1450, and in the list of his works *includes* "The Falls of Princes" (which was by Lydgate), and *omits* "The Canterbury Tales."

Not much of the theological writing of the period possessed more than a passing value. Portions of it are indirectly interesting, as illustrating manners and customs, or as tinged with the peculiar humor of the writer. The sermons of Bishop Latimer, one of the leading reformers, who was burnt at the stake under Mary, possess this twofold attraction. Thus, in preaching against covetousness, he complains of the great rise in rents and in the price of provisions that had taken place in his time; winding up his recital of grievances with the singular climax, "I think, verily, that, if it thus continue, we shall at length be constrained to pay for a pig a pound." The strange humor of the man breaks out in odd similes, in unexpected applications of homely proverbs, in illustrations of the great by the little, and the little by the great. Cranmer's works have but small literary value, though most important —

especially the Letters — from the historical point of view. John Bale already mentioned, Becon, Ridley, Hooper, and Tyndale, all composed theological tracts, chiefly controversial. More, Bishop Fisher, and Pole were the leading writers on the Roman Catholic side. More's English works were printed in a black-letter folio volume, in the year 1557. All except the first two — "A Life of Picus of Mirandula," and the unfinished "History of Edward V." (or of Richard III., as it is called in this edition), which has been already mentioned — are either of a devotional character, or treat of the chief points of religious controversy which were then under debate. His last work (1534), a "Treatise on the Passion," remains unfinished; and the editor has appended in a colophon these touching words: "Sir Thomas More wrote no more of this woorke; for when he had written this farre, he was in prison kept so streyght, that all his bokes and penne and ynke and paper was taken from hym, and sone after was he putte to death."

The close of the period was adorned by the scholarship and refined good sense of Roger Ascham. A native of Yorkshire, he was sent at an early age to Cambridge, and, during a lengthened residence there, diligently promoted the study of the new learning. In 1544 he wrote and dedicated to Henry VIII. his "Toxophilus," a treatise on Archery, in which, for military and other reasons, he deprecates the growing disuse of that noble art. His exertions were vain: we hear, indeed, of the bow as still a formidable weapon at the battle of Pinkie in 1547; but from that date it disappears from our military history. In 1550 Ascham went to Germany as secretary to Sir Richard Morrisine, who was then proceeding as ambassador to the Imperial Court; and in 1553, while at Brussels, he wrote, in the

form of a letter to a friend in England, a curious unfinished tract, in which the character and career of Maurice of Saxony, whose successful enterprise he had witnessed, and of two or three other German princes, are described with much acuteness.

In 1553 he was appointed Latin secretary to Edward VI., and retained the office (the same that Milton held under Cromwell) during the reign of Mary. On the accession of Elizabeth he received the additional appointment of reader in the learned languages to the queen. Elizabeth used to take lessons from him at a stated hour each day. In 1563 he wrote his "Schoolmaster," a treatise on education. This work was never finished, and was printed by his widow in 1571. The sense and acuteness of many of his pedagogic suggestions have been much dwelt upon by Johnson. An excellent biography of Ascham may be found in Hartley Coleridge's "Northern Worthies."

CHAPTER IV.

ELIZABETHAN PERIOD.

1558–1625.

THIS is the golden or Augustan age of English literature. After its brilliant opening under Chaucer, a period of poverty and feebleness had continued for more than a hundred and fifty years. Servile in thought and stiff in expression, it remained unvivified by genius even during the first half of the reign of Elizabeth; and Italy with her Ariosto and Tasso, France with her Marot and Rabelais, Portugal with her Camoens, and even Spain with her Ercilla, appeared to have outstripped England in the race of fame. Hence Sir Philip Sidney in his "Defence of Poesie," written shortly before his death in 1586, after awarding a certain meed of praise to Sackville, Surrey, and Spenser (whose first work had but lately appeared), does not "remember to have seen many more [English poets] that have poetical sinews in them." But after the year 1580 a change became apparent. "England's Helicon," a poetical miscellany (comprising fugitive pieces composed between 1580 and 1600) to which Sidney, Raleigh, Lodge, and Marlowe contributed, is full of genuine and native beauties. Spenser published the first three books of "The Fairie Queen" in 1590; Shakspeare began to write for the stage about the year 1586; and the "Essays" of Francis Bacon were first published in 1597; Raleigh

published his "History of the World" in 1614; and the first portion of Hooker's great work on "Ecclesiastical Polity" appeared in 1594.

The peaceable and firmly settled state of the country under Elizabeth was largely instrumental in the rise of this literary greatness. Under the tyranny of Henry VIII., and again in the short reigns of Edward and Mary, nothing was settled or secure; no calculations for the future could be made with confidence; and those who had not to fear for their lives and property were afraid to express a free opinion, or act an open, independent part. Doubt, suspense, and mutual distrust paralyzed all spontaneous action. At Elizabeth's accession, the perplexed and intimidated nation was almost prepared to receive any form of Christianity which its government chose to impose upon it, provided it could obtain firm social peace. But various considerations concurred at the time to discredit and render unpopular the religion of the pope, and the decisions of the Council of Trent: there was the natural uneasiness of the holders of the Church lands, confiscated in previous reigns, lest, under a Roman Catholic *régime*, restitution should ultimately become the order of the day; then, in aid of this feeling, came the indignation and horror which the revolting cruelties of Mary's government had everywhere excited; lastly, the decrees of a council which sat with the fear of the emperor and the pope continually before its eyes, and in whose deliberations England and the northern nations took no part, were naturally not regarded as representing in all points the final and infallible utterances of the universal Church.

Elizabeth, whose sagacity detected the one paramount political want of the country, concluded, in the second year of her reign, a rather inglorious peace with

France, and devoted all her energies to the work of strengthening the power of her government, passing good laws, and improving the internal administration of the kingdom. The consequences of the durable internal peace thus established were astonishing. Men began to trade, farm, and build with renewed vigor; a great breadth of forest land was reclaimed; travellers went forth to "discover islands far away," and to open new outlets for commerce. Wealth, through this multiplied activity, poured into the kingdom; and that general prosperity was the result which led her subjects to invest the sovereign, under whom all this was done, with a hundred virtues and shining qualities not her own. Of this feeling Shakspeare became the mouthpiece and mirror: —

"She shall be loved and feared: her own shall bless her.
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow. Good grows with her.
In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine, what he plants, and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbors." [1]

There is, indeed, a reverse to the picture. Ireland was devastated in this reign with fire and sword; and the minority in England who adhered to the ancient faith became the victims of an organized system of persecution and plunder. Open a book by Cardinal Allen, and a scene of martyred priests, of harried and plundered laymen, of tortured consciences and bleeding hearts, will blot out from your view the smiling images of peace and plenty above portrayed. The mass of the people, however, went quietly with the government, believing, nor wholly without grounds, that to adhere to the pope meant something more than merely to accept seven sacraments instead of two;

[1] Henry VIII., Act v. Scene 4.

that it meant sympathy with Spain, disloyalty to England, and aid and comfort to her enemies all over the world.

Wealth and ease brought leisure in their train; and leisure demanded entertainment, not for the body only, but also for the mind. The people, for amusement's sake, took up the old popular drama, which had come down from the very beginning of the middle ages; and, after a process of gradual transformation and elaboration by inferior hands, developed it, in the mouths of its Shakspeare, Johnson, and Fletcher, into the world-famed romantic drama of England. As the reading class increased, so did the number of those who strove to minister to its desires; and although the religious convulsions which society had undergone had checked the movement towards a complete and profound appreciation of antiquity, which had been commenced by Colet, More, and Erasmus in the universities, so that England could not then, nor for centuries afterwards, produce scholars in any way comparable to those of the Continent; yet the number of translations which were made of ancient authors proves that there was a general taste for at least a superficial learning, and a very wide diffusion of it. Translation soon led to imitation, and to the projection of new literary works on the purer principles of art disclosed in the classical authors. The epics of Ariosto and Tasso were also translated, the former by Harrington, the latter by Carew and Fairfax; and the fact shows both how eagerly the Italian literature was studied by people of education, and how general must have been the diffusion of an intellectual taste. Spenser doubtless framed his allegory in emulation of the "Orlando" of Ariosto; and the form and idea of Bacon's "Essays" were probably suggested to him by the "Essays" of Montaigne.

Let us now briefly trace the progress, and describe the principal achievements, in poetry and in prose writing, during the period under consideration.

Poets: Spenser, Southwell, Warner, Daniel, Drayton, Donne, Davies, Chapman, Marston, Raleigh.

Among the poets of the period, Spenser holds the first rank. The appearance of his "Shepheard's Calender," in 1579, was considered by his contemporaries to form an epoch in the history of English poetry. This poem is dedicated to Sidney, and in an introductory epistle, feigned to come from a third hand, addressed to his friend Gabriel Harvey, the poet enters into some curious particulars respecting the diction of his work. He commences the epistle by quoting from "the old famous poet" Chaucer, and also from Lydgate, whom he calls "a worthy scholar of so excellent a master." The Calender itself, partly in its metres, partly by an express allusion in the epilogue, supplies us with evidence that he was a diligent reader and admirer of the "Vision of Piers Plowman," by Langland. These three were his English models. He was young, and full of enthusiasm; and there is little wonder if their poetical diction, which, if obsolete, was eminently striking and picturesque, commended itself to his youthful taste more than the composite English current in his own day. His words are as follows: —

"And first of the wordes to speake, I graunt they bee something hard, and of most men unused, yet both English, and also used of most excellent authours and most famous poets. In whom, whereas this our poet hath bin much travailed and thoroughly read, how could it be (as that worthy oratour sayde), but that walking in the sunne, although for other cause he

walked, yet needes he mought be sunburnt; and having the sound of those auncient poets still ringing in his eares, he mought needes in singing hit out some of their tunes? But whether he useth them by such casualtie and custome, or of set purpose and choise, as thinking them fittest for such rusticall rudenesse of shepheards, either for that their rough sound would makes his rimes more ragged and rusticall, or else because such old obsolete wordes are most used of country folke, sure I thinke, and thinke I thinke not amisse, that they bring great grace, and, as one would say, authoritie to the verse. . . . But if any will rashly blame his purpose in choise of old and unwonted wordes, him may I more justly blame and condemne, or of witlesse headinesse in judging, or of heedles hardinesse in condemning; for, not marking the compasse of his bent, he will judge of the length of his cast: for, in my opinion, it is one especial praise of many which are due to this poet, that he hath laboured to restore, as to their rightfull heritage, such good and naturall English wordes as have beene long time out of use, and almost clean disherited, which is the only cause that our mother tongue, which truly of itself is both full enough for prose and stately enough for verse, hath long time been counted of most bare and barren of both. Which default, when as some endeavoured to salve and recure, they patched up the holes with pieces and rags of other languages, borrowing here of the French, there of the Italian, everywhere of the Latin; not weighing how ill those tongues accorded with themselves, but much worse with ours; so now now they have made our English tongue a gallimaufrey,[1] or hodge-podge of all other speeches."

[1] From the French *Galimafrée;* but the origin of the word is unknown.

The twelve eclogues of "The Shepheard's Calender" (Spenser, relying on an erroneous etymology, spells the word "aeglogues") are imitations, so far as their form is concerned, of the pastoral poetry of Theocritus and Virgil. As with these poets, the pastimes, loves, and disappointments of his shepherds, Cuddie, Colin, Hobbinol, and Piers, form the subject-matter of several eclogues. In others, more serious themes are handled. In the fifth, seventh, and ninth, for instance, the abuses both of the old and the new Church are discussed, the chief grounds of attack being the laziness and covetousness of prelates and clergy; the fourth is a panegyrical ode on Queen Elizabeth; in the tenth is set forth "the perfect pattern of a poet;" the eleventh is an elegy on a lady who is named Dido. In the tenth, the poet anticipates, as Milton afterwards did, the loftier strain to which he felt that his genius would ere long impel him.

In 1586 Spenser attained the object of his desires, being appointed secretary to the Lord Grey of Wilton, on his nomination to the vice-royalty of Ireland. To this stay in Ireland, we owe Spenser's only prose work, his "View of the State of Ireland," which, though presented to the queen in manuscript, in 1596, was for political reasons held back from publication till the year 1633. His connection with great men was now established; and we cannot doubt that his great intellect and remarkable powers of application made him a most efficient public servant. Nor were his services left unrewarded. He received, in 1586, a grant of Kilcolman Castle, in the county of Cork, together with some three thousand acres of land, being part of the forfeited estates of the insurgent Earl of Desmond. From this time to his death, in 1599, few particulars are known about him; but he seems to have resided

chiefly in Ireland, and there to have composed his greatest work, "The Faerie Queen." His friend Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom "The Faerie Queen" is dedicated, is thought to have introduced him to Queen Elizabeth, who granted him, in 1591, a pension of fifty pounds a year. In 1598 occurred a rising of the Irish, headed by O'Neill, the famous Earl of Tyrone, which, after the defeat of the English General Bagnal, extended to Munster; and there was no safety for English settlers outside the walls of fortified places. Spenser had to flee from his castle, which was taken and burnt by the insurgents; his infant child is said to have perished in the flames. In the greatest trouble and affliction, he crossed over to England, and died a few months afterwards in a lodging-house in London, being only in his forty-sixth year.

Out of the twelve books composing, or which ought to compose, "The Faerie Queen," we have but six in an entire state, containing the "Legends" of the Red Cross Knight, Sir Guyon, Britomartis, a lady knight, Cambel and Triamond, Sir Artegall, and Sir Calidore. In the characters and adventures of these heroic personages, the virtues of holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy, are severally illustrated and portrayed. Of the remaining six books, we possess, in two cantos on Mutability, a fragment of the Legend on Constancy. Whether any or what other portions of them were ever written, is not certainly known.

It would be vain to attempt, within the limits here prescribed to us, to do justice to the variety and splendor of this poem, which, even in its unfinished state, is more than twice as long as the "Paradise Lost." The allegorical form, which, as we have seen, was the favorite style of the mediæval poets, is carefully pre-

served throughout; but the interest of the narrative, as full of action and incident as an old romance, and the charm of the free, vagrant, open-air life described, make one think and care little for the hidden meaning. "There is something," said Pope, "in Spenser, that pleases one as strongly in one's old age as it did in one's youth. I read 'The Faerie Queen' when I was about twelve, with a vast deal of delight; and I think it gave me as much when I read it over about a year or two ago." [1] An account in some detail of a portion of the second book will be found at a later page.[2]

Of the many shorter poems left by Spenser, we shall notice "The Ruines of Time," and "The Teares of the Muses." The first, dedicated to Sydney's sister the Countess of Pembroke, is, in its main intention, a lament over her noble brother's untimely death. The marvellous poetic energy, the perfect finish, the depth of thought, the grace, tenderness, and richness of this poem, make it eminently illustrative of Spenser's genius.[3] "The Teares of the Muses," published in 1591, is an impassioned protest against the depraved state of the public taste, which at this time, according to Spenser, led society in general to despise learning, nobles to sacrifice true fame to vanity and avarice, and authors to substitute servility and personality for wit. Each Muse bewails in turn the miserable condition of that particular branch of literary art over which she is supposed to preside. Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy, frankly owns that her occupation in England is a sinecure: —

> "But I, that in true tragedies am skilled,
> The flower of wit, find nought to busie me,
> Therefore I mourne, and pitifully mone,
> Because that mourning matter I have none."

[1] Spence's Anecdotes. [2] See p. 387. [3] See p. 388.

This might well be said, when as yet no better tragedy had appeared in England than Sackville's "Gorboduc."

The complaint of Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, is different. The comic stage *had* flourished, thanks to one gifted "gentle spirit;" but he was now keeping silence, and ribaldry and folly had possession of the stage. Then comes the following interesting passage: —

"All these, and all that else the comic stage
With seasoned wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which man's life, in his likest image,
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweet wits, which wont the like to frame,
Are now despised, and made a laughing game.

And he, the man whom Nature's self had made
To mock herselfe, and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter, under mimic shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late;—
With whom all joy and jolly merriment
Is also deaded and in dolour drent.

Instead thereof, scoffing scurrilitie
And scornful folly with contempt is crept,
Rolling in rymes of shameless ribaudry,
Without regard or due decorum kept;
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the learned's task upon him take.

But that some gentle spirit, from whose pen
Large streams of honnie and sweet nectar flowe,
Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throwe,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell,
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell."

In spite of Mr. Todd's petty objections, I firmly believe that here we have Spenser's tribute to the mighty genius that had already given "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Love's Labor's Lost," "The Taming of the Shrew," and probably one or two other comedies, to the English stage.

In "Colin Clout's come home againe," Spenser, having returned to his Irish home, describes the visit which he paid to England in 1591, the condescension of the queen, and the ways of the court; all under the mask of a conversation between shepherds and shepherdesses. The "Foure Hymnes" in honor of earthly and heavenly love, earthly and heavenly beauty, are written in the Chaucerian heptastich; the force and harmony of the verse are wonderful. "Mother Hubbard's Tale," a work of the poet's youth, is in the heroic couplet; it is in the main a satire, first exposing with a lofty scorn the hypocrisy and self-seeking of the new clergy, and then turning off to paint the meanness, cunning, and hardheartedness which pervade the atmosphere of a court. It is in this connection that the famous passage occurs, thought to embody his own experience, which describes the miserable life of a suitor for some favor at court. "Daphnaida" and "Astrophel" are elegies, the last upon the death of Sir Philip Sidney. The lovely nuptial hymn, "Epithalamion," was written on the occasion of his marriage; its metre and movement are Pindaric. "Muiopotmos" is an elaborate poem, in the fantastic style, on the fate of a butterfly.

The reader will observe that there is a wide interval, in respect of the polish and modern air of the diction, between the productions of 1579 and those of 1590 and 1591. One may reasonably conjecture that the perusal of such a play as "Two Gentlemen of Verona," had led Spenser to modify considerably his youthful theory, giving the preference to the obsolete English of a former age.

The poems of Shakspeare all fall within the early part of his life, they were all composed before 1598. Writing in that year, Meres, in the "Wit's Treasury," says, "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous honey-tongued Shakspeare. Witness his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' his sugared sonnets among his private friends." These, together with such portions of "The Passionate Pilgrim" and the "Lover's Complaint" as may have been his genuine composition, constitute the whole of Shakspeare's poems, as distinguished from his plays.

The sonnets, a hundred and fifty-four in number, were first published by a bookseller, Thomas Thorpe, in 1609, with a dedication to a Mr. W. H., "the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets." Yet there are some among them that are evidently addressed to a woman. The tone of self-humiliating adulation which pervades those of which Mr. W. H. appears to have been the object, has always been a mystery and a trouble to the admirers of Shakspeare, who have been driven to invent various hypotheses to account for it. The subject is fully discussed by Mr. Knight in his "Pictorial Shakspeare," and briefly handled by Hallam in the third volume of his "Literary History."

Of the minor poets of the Elizabethan age, the earliest in date among those that attained to real distinction was Robert Southwell[1] the Jesuit, cruelly put to death by the Government in 1595, for the crime of having been found in England, endeavoring to supply his family and friends with priestly ministrations. His poems, under the title of "St. Peter's Complaint, with other Poems," appeared in the same year that he was executed, and were many times reprinted during the next forty years. Southwell, it seems, was the founder of the modern English style of religious poetry; his influence and example are evident in the work of Crashaw, or of Donne, or of Herbert, or Waller, or any of those whose devout lyrics were admired in later times. Chaucer had, it is true, shown in the prologue to "The Prioress' Tale," and in the poem called his A. B. C. in honor of the blessed Virgin, how much the English tongue was capable of in this direction. But the language was now greatly altered; and Chaucer, though admired, was looked upon as no subject for direct imitation. The poets of the time were much more

[1] See his Poetical Works, edited by the late Mr. Turnbull, 1856.

solicitous to write like Ovid than like Isaiah. We may admit the truth, excluding only Spenser from its application, of Southwell's general censure, that,—

'In lieu of solemn and devout matters, to which in duty they owe their abilities, they now busy themselves in expressing such passions as serve only for testimonies to what unworthy affections they have wedded their wills. And because the best course to let them see the error of their works is to weave a new web in their own loom, I have laid a few coarse threads together, to invite some skilfuller wits to go forward in the same, or to begin some finer piece, wherein it may be seen how well verse and virtue suit together.'

Southwell was attacked by Hall, then an eager rising young man at Cambridge, in the first book of his satires, called "Virgidemiæ."[1] Hall's notion seems to have been, that verse was too trivial and too worldly a garb wherein to clothe religious thought. But Marston smote the smiter, who had railed —

"'Gainst Peter's teares and Marie's moving moane,"

And argued the matter out rather forcibly: —

"Shall painims honor their vile falsed gods
With sprightly wits, and shall not we by odds
Far far more strive with wit's best quintessence
To adore that sacred ever-living Essence?
Hath not strong reason moved the legist's mind,
To say that fairest of all nature's kind
The prince by his prerogative may claim?
Why may not then our soules, without thy blame,
(Which is the best thing that our God did frame),
Devote the best part to His sacred name,
And with due reverence and devotion
Honor His name with our invention?

[1] See p. 408.

No; poesie not fit for such an action;
It is defiled with superstition:
It honored Baal; therefore pollute, pollute,
Unfit for such a sacred institute.
So have I heard an heretick maintain
The church unholy, where Jehovah's name
Is now adored, because he surely knows
Some-times it was defiled with Popish shows," &c.[1]

In all these religious and moral poems of Southwell's, there is a liberal use of figure, trope, metaphor, similitude, and all such poetic devices; but the deep, strong, loving heart beneath sanctifies and excuses the extravagance, if any there be, in the language.

William Warner, by profession an attorney, is said[1] to have first published his "Albion's England" in 1586. This unwieldy poem (which some read and print in long fourteens, and others in short eights and sixes — it makes not the smallest difference) is in the style of the old rhyming chronicles; beginning at the flood, it traces, through twelve books, the history of Britain, loyally and properly terminating with the reign of Elizabeth. The poem opens thus: —

"I tell of things done long ago,
Of many things in few;
And chiefly of this clyme of ours
The accidents pursue.
Thou high director of the same,
Assist mine artlesse pen,
To write the gests of Britons stout,
And actes of English men."

Never was a circle of more richly-gifted spirits congregated in one city than the company of poets and playwrights gathered round the court in London between 1590 and 1610. From Kent came Samuel Chapman, the translator of Homer; from Somersetshire the

[1] Marston's works (ed. J. O. Halliwell, 1856). Satyre IV.
[2] See Warton, vol. iv. p. 303, *n*.

gentle and high-thoughted Daniel; Warwickshire sent Michael Drayton, author of the "Polyolbion," and William Shakspeare; Raleigh — who shone in poetry as in every thing else he attempted — came from Devonshire; London itself was the birthplace of Donne, Spenser, and Jonson. All these great men, there is reason to believe, were familiarly acquainted, and in constant intercourse with one another; but unhappily the age produced no Boswell; and their table-talk, brilliant as it must have been, was lost to posterity. One dim glimpse of one of its phases has been preserved in the well-known passage by Thomas Fuller, writing in 1662: —

"Many were the wit combats between him and Ben Jonson; which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention. He died A.D. 1616, and was buried at Stratford-upon-Avon, the town of his nativity."

The great intellectual activity which pervaded the English nation during this period, the sanguine aspiring temper which prevailed, the enthusiastic looking forward to an expanding and glorious future which filled the hearts of most men, are certified to us in the works of a crowd of writers of the second rank, of whom, though scarcely one did not attempt many things for which he was ill qualified, almost all have left us something that is worth remembering. Among these one of the most remarkable was Samuel Daniel. He had

an ambition to write a great epic; but in this he signally failed. His "Wars of the Roses," a poem in eight books, written in the eight-line stanza, — the *ottava rima* of Italy, — is a heavy, lifeless production, in which there are innumerable descriptions of men's motives and plans, but not one description of a battle. He had no eye for a stirring picturesque scene, no art to make his characters distinct and natural: the poem, therefore, produces the effect of a sober and judicious chronicle done into verse, in which the Hotspurs, Mortimers, and Warwicks are all very much of a piece. His eyes seem at last to have been opened to the fact that he was only wasting his time; for the poem breaks off suddenly just before the battle of Tewkesbury. But the meditative temper of Daniel stood him in good stead in other attempts. His "Epistle to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland," is marked by an elevated idealism. But his best work is certainly the "Musophilus." This is in the form of a dialogue between a man of the world, disposed to ridicule and contemn the pursuits of men of letters, and the poet himself. The progressive and hopeful character of the age is well illustrated in the fine passages in which the poet foretells an approaching vast expansion of the field of science, and dreams of great and unimagined destinies (since then how fully realized!) reserved for the English tongue.

Michael Drayton also was no mean poet; indeed, Mr. Hallam considered that he had greater reach of mind than Daniel. And this, nakedly stated, is undoubtedly true; Drayton had more variety, more energy, more knowledge of mankind, and far more liveliness, than Daniel. His "Baron's Wars" are not tame or prosaic; they are full of action and strife; swords flash and helmets rattle on every page. But unfortunately, Mortimer, the hero of the poem, the guilty favorite of

Edward II.'s queen, is a personage in whom we vainly endeavor to get up an interest. There is much prolixity of description in this poem, due, it would seem, to imitation of Spenser, whose influence on Drayton's mind and style is conspicuous. But it is one thing to be prolix in a work of pure imagination, when the poet detains us thereby in that magic world of unearthly beauty in which his own spirit habitually dwells, and quite another thing to be prolix in a poem founded upon and closely following historical fact. When both the close and the chief turning-points of the story are known to the reader beforehand, the introduction of fanciful episodes and digressions, unless admirably managed, is apt to strike him as laborious trifling. If Drayton had known, like Tasso, how to associate Clorindas and Erminias with his historical personages, he might have been as discursive as he pleased. But this was "a grace beyond the reach" of his art; and "The Baron's Wars" remain, therefore, incurably uninteresting. "England's Heroical Epistles," published in 1598, have a much stronger claim to distinction. This work, which is in the heroic couplet, consists of twelve pairs of epistles, after the manner of Ovid, supposed to be exchanged between so many pairs of royal or noble lovers: among these are Henry II. and Fair Rosamond, Owen Tudor and Queen Catharine, Surrey and Geraldine, Guilford Dudley and Lady Jane Grey. The style is flowing, fiery, and energetic, and withal extremely *modern;* it seems to anticipate the "full resounding line" of Dryden, and to rebuke the presumption of the poets of the Stuart age, who chose to say that English had never been properly and purely written till Waller and Denham arose. "The Moon-calf" is a strange satire — and one of a higher order than the weak, uncouth attempts of Hall, Donne, and

Marston — on the morals and manners of the time. One of the best known of Drayton's poems is "The Nymphidia." This is in a common romance metre (the same which Chaucer used for his "Sir Thopas"), and has for its subject the amours of the court of fairy land. It is a work of the liveliest fancy, but not of imagination. It is interesting to find Don Quixote referred to in a poem published so soon after Cervantes' death, —

> "Men talk of the adventures strange
> Of Don Quichot and of their change."

The most celebrated of our author's works still remains to be noticed, — "The Polyolbion."[1] This is a poem of enormous length, written in the Alexandrine or twelve-syllable rhyming couplet, and aiming at a complete topographical and antiquarian delineation of England. The literary merits of this Cyclopean performance are undeniable. Mr. Hallam thinks that "there is probably no poem of this kind in any other language comparable together in extent and excellence to 'The Polyolbion;' nor can any one read a portion of it without admiration for its learned and highly gifted author." But the historian of literature goes on to say that "perhaps no English poem, known so well by name, is so little known beyond its name;" and, on the whole, the verdict of criticism pronounces it to be one huge mistake; to be a composition possessing neither the unity of a work of art, nor the utility of a topographical dictionary.

Of Drayton's personal history we know almost nothing; but when we come to speak of John Donne, the image of a strange wayward life, actuated evermore by a morbid restlessness of the intellect, rises to our thoughts. This man, whose youthful "Epithalamia"

[1] See p. 423.

are tainted by a gross sensuality, ended his career as the grave and learned Dean of St. Paul's, whose sermons furnish the text for pages of admiring commentary to S. T. Coleridge.[1] One fancies him a man with a high forehead, but false wavering eye, whose subtlety, one knows, will make any cause that he takes up seem for the moment unimpeachable; but of whose moral genuineness in the different phases he assumes, of whose sincere love of truth as truth, one has incurable doubts. As a writer, the great popularity which he enjoyed in his own day has long since given way before the repulsive harshness and involved obscurity of his style. The painful puns, the far-fetched similes, the extravagant metaphors, which in Shakspeare occur but as occasional blemishes, form the substance of the poetry of Donne; if they were taken out, very little would be left. He is the earliest poet of the fantastic or metaphysical school, of which we shall have more to say in the next chapter. The term "metaphysical," first applied to the school by Johnson, though not inappropriate, is hardly distinctive enough. It is not inappropriate, because the philosophizing spirit pervades their works; and it is the activity of the intellect, rather than that of the emotions, by which they are characterized. The mind, the nature of man, any faculty of virtue appertaining to the mind, and even any external phenomenon, can hardly be mentioned without being analyzed, without subtle hair-splitting divisions and distinctions being drawn out, which the poet of feeling could never stop to elaborate. But this is equally true of a great deal that Shakspeare (especially in his later years) and even that Milton has written, whom yet no one ever thought of including among the metaphysical poets. It is the tendency to

[1] In the Literary Remains, vol. iii.

conceits, — that is, to an abuse of the imaginative faculty, by tracing resemblances that are fantastic, or uncalled for, or unseemly, — which really distinguishes this school from other schools. This point will be further illustrated in connection with the poetry of Cowley.

Donne's poems are generally short; they consist of elegies, funeral elegies, satires, letters, divine poems, and miscellaneous songs. Besides these, he wrote "Metempsychosis; or, the Progress of the Soul," a poem published in 1601, "of which," Jonson told Drummond in 1618, "he now, since he was made doctor, repenteth highlie, and seeketh to destroy all his poems." In a man of so much mind, it cannot be but that fine lines and stanzas occasionally relieve the mass of barbarous quaintness. Take, for instance, the following stanza from the letter to Sir H. Wotton: —

> "Believe me, sir, in my youth's giddiest days,
> When to be like the court was a player's praise,
> Plays were not so like courts, as courts like plays;"

or this, from the letter to R. Woodward: —

> "We are but farmers of ourselves, yet may,
> If we can stock ourselves and thrive, up-lay
> Much, much good treasure 'gainst the great rent-day."

Toward the end of the century, a serious, reflecting mood seems to have been the prevailing temper in the educated part of the nation: our writers loved to dive or soar into abstruse and sublime speculations. Among the noblest memorials of this philosophic bent, is "The Nosce Teipsum" of Sir John Davies, attorney-general for Ireland, — a poem on the soul of man, which it aims to prove immaterial and immortal. It is in the heroic quatrain or four-lined stanza, with alternate rhymes; a metre afterwards employed by Davenant, Dryden, and

Gray. The philosophy is Christian and Platonic, as opposed to the systems of the materialist and epicurean. The versification is clear, sonorous, and full of dignity. There is a passage at the end of the introduction, which curiously resembles the celebrated meditation in Pascal's "Pensées" upon the greatness and littleness which are conjoined in man: —

"I know my body's of so frail a kind
As force without, fevers within, can kill;
I know the heavenly nature of my mind,
But 'tis corrupted both in wit and will;

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all;
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall;

I know my life's a pain, and but a span;
I know my sense is mocked in every thing;
And, to conclude, I know myself a man,
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing."

George Chapman and John Marston belonged to the same literary set, about which unhappily we know so little, that included Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. As a second-rate dramatist, Chapman will receive some notice further on, here a few words must be said about his translation of "The Iliad," which appeared about 1601. It is written in the same metre as Warner's "Albion's England," but always printed in long fourteen-syllable rhyming lines. Considered as exhibiting imaginative power, and rapidity of movement, this version does not ill represent the original: the Elizabethan poets well understood how to make words the musical symbols of ideas, and were not given to dawdle or falter on their way. But the simplicity and dignity of the original — in other words, the points which constitute the unapproached *elevation* of Homer in poetry and art — these

were characteristics which it was beyond the reach of Chapman to reproduce.[1] Still considering the time at which it appeared, and that this was the first complete metrical version of "The Iliad" which had appeared in any modern language, it was truly a surprising and a gallant venture, and well typifies the intensity of force with which the English intellect, at this strange period, was working in every direction.

Marston is the author of five separate satires (1598), besides three books of satires, collectively named "The Scourge of Villanie" (1599). The separate satires are not without merit, as the passage given above (p. 85), which was taken from the fourth of them, might prove. The second contains an attack on the Puritans, who first appeared a few years before this time as a separate party. A Puritan citizen who said grace for half an hour, but was a griping usurer, is thus satirized: —

> "No Jew, no Turke, would use a Christian
> So inhumanely as this Puritan.
> . . . . . .
> Take heed, O worlde! take heed advisedly,
> Of these same damned anthropophagi.
> I had rather be within an harpie's clawes
> Than trust myself in their devouring jawes,
> Who all confusion to the world would bring
> Under the forme of their new discipline.

"The Scourge of Villanie" is much inferior to the separate satires. The author gloats over the immoralities which he pretends to scourge, in a manner which forces one to think of "Satan reproving sin." All is invective; those delightful changes of hand, with which Horace wanders back to the scenes of his boyhood, or gives us his opinion of Lucilius, or sketches the poetical character, or playfully caricatures the Stoic philoso-

[1] See the lectures of my brother, the late professor of poetry, On Translating Homer.

phy, are not for the imitation of such blundering matter-of-fact satirists as Hall, or Donne, or Marston. With them satire is satire: they begin to call names in the first line, and, with the tenacity of their country's bull-dogs, continue to worry their game down to the very end.

Sir Walter Raleigh, the gay courtier, the gallant soldier, the discoverer of Virginia, the father of English colonization, the wily diplomatist, the learned historian, the charming poet, — as he did every thing else well by the force of that bright and incomparable genius of his, so he is the author of a few beautiful and thoughtful poems.[1] I am persuaded that he wrote "The Lie;" for I do not believe that any one then living, except Shakspeare, was so capable of having written it.[2]

Dramatists. — Origin of the English Drama; the Dramatic Unities; Heywood, Marlowe, Shakspeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford, Webster, Marston, Chapman, Dekker, T. Heywood, Rowley, Tourneur, Shirley.

What we have to say on the development of the drama in this period may best be prefaced by a brief sketch of its rise and progress in the middle ages.

Five distinct influences or tendencies are traceable as having co-operated, in various degrees and ways, in the development of the drama. These are: 1, the didactic efforts of the clergy; 2, mediæval philosophy; 3, the revival of ancient learning; 4, the influence of the feel-

[1] Printed at the end of vol. viii. of the Oxford edition of Raleigh's works.

[2] The evidence is not conclusive either way. It certainly was not written "the night before his execution," according to the common story, because it had appeared in Davison's Poetical Rhapsody in 1602; but Raleigh's name was given by the printer as one of the contributors to the Rhapsody, and to him, above all the other contributors, in my opinion at least, may the Lie most reasonably be assigned.

ing of nationality; 5, the influence of Continental literature, especially that of Italy.

The first rude attempts in this country to revive those theatrical exhibitions, which, in their early and glorious forms, had been involved in the general destruction of the ancient world, were due to the clergy. They arose out of a perception that what we see with our eyes makes a greater impression upon us than what we merely hear with our ears. It was seen that many events in the life of Christ, as well as in the history of the Christian Church, would easily admit of being dramatized, and thus brought home, as it were, to the feelings and consciences of large bodies of men more effectually than by sermons. As to books, they of course were, at the time now spoken of, accessible only to an insignificant minority. The early plays which thus arose were called "miracles," or "miracle-plays," because miraculous narratives, taken from Scripture or from the lives of the saints, formed their chief subject.

The earliest known specimens of these miracle-plays, according to Mr. Wright,[1] were composed in Latin by one Hilarius, an English monk, and a disciple of the famous Abelard, in the early part of the twelfth century. The subjects of these are the raising of Lazarus, a miracle of St. Nicholas, and the life of Daniel. Similar compositions in French date from the thirteenth century; but Mr. Wright does not believe that any were composed in English before the fourteenth. The following passage, from Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," will give a general notion of the mode in which they were performed. It relates to the famous "Coventry Mysteries," of which a nearly complete set has been preserved, and published by the Shakspeare Society: —

[1] Introduction to the Chester Plays, published for the Shakspeare Society.

"Before the suppression of the monasteries, this cittye was very famous for the pageants that were played therein, upon Corpus Christi day. These pageants were acted with mighty state and reverence by the fryers of this house (the Franciscan monastery at Coventry), and conteyned the story of the New Testament, which was composed into old English rime. The theatres for the severall scenes were very large and high; and, being placed upon wheeles, were drawn to all the eminent places of the cittye, for the better advantage of the spectators."

These travelling show-vans remind one of Thespis, the founder of Greek tragedy, who is said to have gone about in his theatrical cart, from town to town, exhibiting his plays. According to older authorities, the moveable theatre itself was originally signified by the term "pageant," not the piece performed in it. "The Coventry Mysteries" were performed in Easter week. The set which we have of them is divided into forty-two parts, or scenes, to each of which its own "pageant," or moving theatre, was assigned. Traversing, by a prescribed round, the principal streets of the city, each pageant stopped at certain points along the route; and the actors whom it contained, flinging open the doors, proceeded to perform the scenes allotted to them. Stage properties and gorgeous dresses were not wanting; we even meet, in the old corporation accounts, with such items as money advanced for the effective exhibition of hell-fire. Two days were occupied in the performance of the forty-two scenes; and a person standing at any one of the appointed halting-places would be able to witness the entire drama. The following passage presents a fair sample of the roughness of style and homeliness of conception which characterize these mysteries throughout; it is taken from the pageant of "The Temptation:" —

"Now if thou be Goddys Sone of might,
Ryght down to the erthe anon thou falle,
And save thisylf in every plyght
From harm and hurt and peinys alle;

For it is wretyn, aungelys bright
That ben in hevyn, thy faderes halle,
Thee to kepe bothe day and nyght,
Xal be ful redy as thi tharalle,
Hurt that thou non have :
That thou stomele not ageyn the stone,
And hurt thi fote as thou dost gon,
Aungelle be ready all everychon
In weyes thee to save."

"It is wretyn in holy book,
Thi Lord God thou shalt not tempte;
All things must obey to Goddys look,
Out of His might is non exempt;
Out of thi cursydness and cruel crook
By Godys grace man xal be redempt;—
Whan thou to helle, thi brennynge brooke,
To endles peyne xal evyn be dempt,
Therein alwey to abyde," &c.

The philosophy of the middle ages, which we have named as the second influence co-operating to the development of the drama, dealt much in abstract terms, and delighted in definitions and logical distinctions. Debarred partly by superstition and tyranny, partly by its own inexperience, from profitable inquiry into nature and her laws, the mind was thrown back upon itself, its own powers, and immediate instruments; and the fruits were an infinite number of metaphysical cobwebs, logical subtleties, and quips or plays upon words. Thus, instead of proceeding onward from the dramatic exhibition of scriptural personages and scenes to that of real life and character, the mediæval playwrights perversely went backwards, and refined away the scriptural personages into mere moral abstractions. Thus, instead of the Jonathan and Satan of the mystery, we come to the Friendship and the Vice of the moral play, or morality, — a dramatic form which seems to have become popular in this country about the middle of the fifteenth century. How far this folly would have gone it is im-

possible to say: fortunately it was cut short by the third influence mentioned, — the revival of ancient learning. When the plays of Terence and Sophocles, nay, even those of Seneca, became generally known, none but a pedant or a dunce could put up with the insufferable dulness of a moral play.

The earliest known English comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," bears plain marks of the power of this new influence. Its author was Nicholas Udall, master of Eton College. The exact date of its publication is unknown; but it was certainly composed before 1551. It is written in jingling rhyme, the lines being usually of twelve syllables, though frequently shorter. It is divided into acts and scenes, like those plays of Plautus and Terence of which it is a professed imitation. Critics have spoken of its liveliness and wit, of the clever management of the plot, and other good qualities; but the style is too utterly barbarous to admit of its interesting any one but a literary antiquarian. "Gammer Gurton's Needle" and "Misogonus," both probably composed before 1560, are comedies of the same kind. Our dramatists at this period had sufficient sense to admire the ancients, but not enough to make them despise themselves and their own productions. The more flexible French genius had already begun to follow the advice of the poet Du Bellay, who, writing in the year 1548, says, "Translation is not a sufficient means to elevate our vernacular speech to the level of the most famous languages. What must we do, then? Imitate! imitate the Romans as they imitated the Greeks, as Cicero imitated Demosthenes, and Virgil Homer. We must transform the best authors into ourselves, and, after having digested them, convert them into blood and nutriment." Yet, on the other hand, the sturdy English independence brought with it countervailing

advantages: but for it, the Elizabethan literature, while gaining perhaps in polish and correctness, would have lost tenfold more in the free play of thought, in exuberance and boldness of conception, and in that display of creative genius which invents new forms for modern wants.

Before the appearance of comedies properly so called, a sort of intermediate style was introduced by John Heywood, jester and musician at the court of Henry VIII. He produced several short plays which he called interludes. The name had been in use for some time, and merely signified a dramatic piece performed in the intervals of a banquet, court pageant, or other festivity. Moral plays are thus frequently described by their authors as interludes. But the novel character of Heywood's plays, and the popularity which they obtained, caused the name of interlude to be, after his time, reserved for plays of similar aim and construction. The novelty consisted in this: that whereas, in a moral play, the characters are personified qualities (Felicity, False Semblance, Youth, &c.), in an interterlude they are true persons, but not yet individuals; they are the representatives of classes. Thus, in Heywood's clever interlude of "The Four P's," the leading characters are, the Peddler, the Palmer, the Pardoner, and the Poticary. In another, one of the characters is even named; this is "A Mery Play betwene the Pardonere and the Frere, the Curate and Neighbour Pratte."

No comedies worthy of mention appeared after the time of Udall and Still, for more than twenty years, — not till the time of Greene, Peele, and Marlowe, the immediate predecessors and contemporaries of Shakspeare.

The earliest known tragedy was brought upon the stage in 1562, under the title of "Gorboduc," or "Ferrex and Porrex." It was jointly composed by Sackville, afterwards Lord Buckhurst, and Thomas Norton, a Puritan lawyer. It is the first English drama of any kind written in blank verse. The subject, like that of Shakspeare's "King Lear," is taken from the fabulous British annals, originally compiled by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century, and innocently copied

into the histories of most of the chroniclers down tc the time of Milton. The writers were educated men; and it seems probable that they chose an episode taken from the legendary history of Britain as the subject of their tragedy, in imitation of the Greek tragedians, whose constant storehouse of materials was the mythical traditions of Greece. Similarly Milton thought of writing an epic poem on the legend of Arthur and his knights. But this play bears witness also to the influence of the fourth tendency noted above, — the desire to deepen and justify the pride of English nationality. The play is full of allusions to the present state of things, enforcing the advantages of peace and settled government, the evils of popular risings and a disputed succession. The same design of illustrating the present by the past is apparent in an old play written so far back as the last years of Henry VIII., the "Kynge Johan" of Bishop Bale, a piece holding an intermediate position between the moral play and the regular drama, some of the situations and ideas of which are, possibly through the medium of a later play on the same subject published in 1591, worked up in the "King John" of Shakspeare. But our first truly historical play seems to have been "The Life of Edward II.," by Christopher Marlowe. Mr. Hallam calls it "by far the best, after [the historical plays of] Shakspeare." Marlowe was a man of great powers; his "mighty line" was praised by Ben Jonson: but his wild and dissolute habits brought his life to a premature close through a tavern brawl in 1593. His "Tragedy of Dr. Faustus" has attracted attention, of late years, owing to the celebrity with which Goethe's great work has invested the old story. It has striking and eloquent passages; but bombast and bad taste overspread it to such a degree as quite to spoil the general effect.

The fondness for seeing the past history of the nation exhibited in dramatic show conduced, more than any other single cause, to that constant neglect of the dramatic "unities" for which our English play-writers are conspicuous. This, therefore, is the place to explain what those unities were, and how our early tragedians came to violate them.

Aristotle, in his "Treatise on Poetry," collects from the practice of the Greek dramatists certain rules of art, as necessary to be observed in order that any tragedy may have its full effect upon the audience. The chief of these relates to the action represented, which, he says, must be *one*, *complete*, and *important*. This rule has been called the unity of action. He also says that tragedy "for the most part endeavors to conclude itself within one revolution of the sun, or nearly so." This rule, limiting the time during which the action represented takes place to twenty-four hours, or thereabouts, has been called the unity of time. A third rule, not expressly mentioned by Aristotle, but nearly always observed by the Greek tragedians, requires that the entire action shall be transacted in the same locality; this is called the unity of place. These three rules were carefully observed by the first Italian tragedians, Rucellai and Trissino; and also in France, when the drama took root there. In Spain and in England they were neglected, and apparently for the same reason, — that both peoples were fervently national, and intensely self-conscious; and therefore, in order to gratify them, the drama tended to assume the historic form, — a form which necessitates the violation of the unities.[1] Marlowe, in his historical tragedy of "Edward II.," and Shakspeare, in his ten historical plays, proceed upon this principle. Shakspeare, how-

[1] See Critical Section, chap. I., "Dramatic Poetry."

ever, when he wrote to gratify his own taste rather than that of the public, so far showed his recognition of the soundness of the old classical rules, that in the best of his tragedies he carefully observed the unity of action, although he judged it expedient, perhaps with reference partly to the coarser perceptions of his audience, to sacrifice those lesser congruities of place and time which the sensitive Athenian taste demanded, to the requirements of a wider, though looser, conception of the ends of dramatic art.

Marlowe, Peele, Greene, Nash, and Lodge, were all young men together, and all writing for the London stage between the years 1585 and 1593. They had all received a university education, and as brother wits and boon companions were on terms of the freest intimacy. But an interloper, an upstart, a mere provincial who had never seen the inside of a college; worse than all, a *player*, who ought to have deemed it sufficient honor to perform the plays which these choice spirits condescended to write, — had come up from Warwickshire to confound them all. The grievance is thus alluded to by Greene, in a curious pamphlet called "A Groat's Worth of Wit," written just before his death in 1593. Addressing three of his brother dramatists, supposed to be Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, he says, — "Is it not strange that I to whom they [the players] all have been beholding, is it not like that you to whom they all have been beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both of them at once forsaken? Yes: trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute Johannes factotum, is, in his own conceit, *the only Shake-scene in a country.*" We shall

have occasion to examine into the meaning of Greene's charge presently. From this passage, besides other slight indications pointing the same way, it may be concluded that Shakspeare (for no one has ever doubted that the allusion is aimed at him) had begun to employ himself in dramatic writing before 1592, that he moved in a different circle in society from that which was formed by the educated wits and *literati* of London, and that he had been busy in adapting other men's plays for production at his own theatre.

Every one knows how few and meagre are the known facts of Shakspeare's biography. "The two greatest names in poetry," says Mr. Hallam, "are to us little more than names. If we are not yet come to question his unity, as we do that of 'the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle,' an improvement in critical acuteness doubtless reserved for a distant posterity, we as little feel the power of identifying the young man who came up from Stratford, was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, and retired to his native place in middle life, with the author of 'Macbeth' and 'Lear,' as we can give a distinct historic personality to Homer. . . . It is not the register of his baptism, or the draft of his will, or the orthography of his name, that we seek. No letter of his writing, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn with any fulness by a contemporary, has been produced."

Such as they are, however, the chief of those particulars which untiring research has either firmly established, or placed on the level of strong probabilities, must here be related. William Shakspeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in April, 1564. He received, as far as we know, no better education than the grammar school of the place afforded; and, soon after he had reached his twentieth year, was drawn up to London,

probably through the influence of his friend Richard Burbage, a leading actor of the day, and himself a Warwickshire man. Shakspeare's name stands twelfth in a list still extant, of the date of 1589, containing the names of sixteen players who were at the same time joint proprietors of the Blackfriars Theatre. In a similar list, dated in 1596, he stands fourth, having evidently in the interval attained to a much more important position in the partnership. At this latter date the company were in possession, not only of their old theatre at the Blackfriars, but of a new one by the river-side, called the Globe Theatre, which they used for summer performances. Already, before 1592, besides altering old plays, Shakspeare had written several independent dramas, to be performed by his company. In 1598 — as we learn from a passage in "Meres' Wit's Treasury" published in that year — at least twelve of his plays had appeared; namely, the comedies of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Love's Labor's Lost," "The Comedy of Errors," "Love's Labor Won" (supposed to be "All's Well that Ends Well"), "Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Merchant of Venice;" the historical plays of Richard II., Richard III., Henry IV., and King John; and the tragedies of "Titus Andronicus" and "Romeo and Juliet." "Othello" first appeared in 1602; "Hamlet," in its original shape, was brought out in 1603; "King Lear," in 1608. "Macbeth" was produced some time between the years 1603 and 1610. Shakspeare prospered in his profession; he amassed a considerable fortune, which we find him to have invested in houses and lands at Stratford, whither he retired to live at his ease some years before his death in 1616. During this retirement, he probably wrote the three Roman plays, "Julius Cæsar," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus."

Out of thirty-five plays which Shakspeare has left us (excluding "Titus Andronicus" and "Pericles Prince of Tyre," and waiving the difficult question as to his connection with the three parts of "Henry VI.)," fourteen are comedies, eleven tragedies, and ten histories. With reference to Shakspeare, the term "comedy" simply denotes a play that ends happily; but it may have abounded, in the development of the plot, with serious and pathetic incidents. This intermediate style was afterwards called by Fletcher "tragi-comedy," a term which he appropriated to those plays in which the final issue of the plot is for good, yet in which, while that issue remains in suspense, some of the principal personages are brought so near to destruction that the true tragic interest is excited. Eighteen of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher answer to this description; which would also obviously apply to "Measure for Measure," "The Merchant of Venice," or "Winter's Tale."

The influence of the fifth developing cause mentioned above, viz., the study of Continental literature, is apparent at once when we turn to Shakspeare's comedies. Ariosto's two comedies, the "Cassaria" and the "Suppositi," first acted in 1512, were, like our own "Roister Doister," formed upon ancient models; but they were written in flowing blank verse, and in a language already polished and beautiful, — circumstances which, apart from the genius of the writer, would go far to account for the great popularity which they obtained. They were translated into English by George Gascoyne; and it is probable that to these and other Italian comedies Shakspeare owed much. That he was well read in Italian tales is certain, since from the plots no fewer than six of his comedies were derived. One, "Love's Labor's Lost," comes presumably from a

French source; and one, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," from a Spanish source. But, after all, it is a matter of little consequence, from what source his materials were derived. Whether they were coarse or fine, his transforming touch changed them all alike into gold; and so infinitely superior are the very earliest in date of his comedies to any that had appeared before, that one might truly call all such pieces, even as "The Taming of a Shrew,"[4] and Greene's "Orlando Furioso," — much more, of course, the performances of Udall and Still, — mere rough drafts, or attempts at the comic style, and say that English comedy really commences with Shakspeare. Nothing strikes one more than the comparative simplicity and purity of style even in his early plays. The dramatists of the day were mostly men who had received a university education; and they seem to have thought, that, unless they gave abundant proof of their college-learning in their plays, people would hold them cheap. So, with the grossest disregard to dramatic fitness, the speeches of nearly all their characters are stuffed full with high-flown classical allusions, introducing us to all the gods of Olympus, and all the principal places of the world as known to the ancients. A few lines from the old "Taming of a Shrew" may serve by way of illustration: —

> "Sweet Kate, thou lovelier than Diana's purple robe,
> Whiter than are the snowy Apennines,
> Or icy hair that grows on Boreas' chin.
> Father, I swear by Ibis' golden beak,
> More fair and radiant is my bonny Kate
> Than silver Xanthus, when he doth embrace
> The ruddy Simois at Ida's feet," &c.

[4] Upon this old play, which Mr. Knight conjectures to have been the work of Greene, Shakspeare modelled his "Taming of *the* Shrew."

The speaker in these lines is Ferando, the character in the old play corresponding to Shakspeare's Petruchio. If we turn to Shakspeare's play, we see that he, too, makes Petruchio compare Kate to Diana; but mark the difference: —

Pet. Did ever Dian so become a grove
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?
Oh! be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;
And then let Kate be chaste, and Dian sportful.
Kate. Where did you study all this goodly speech?
Pet. It is extempore, from my mother wit.

This is no more than might be naturally and fitly put in the mouth of the eccentric gentleman from Verona, while the former passage is mere rant and fustian. However, it cannot truthfully be denied that Shakspeare, too, falls sometimes into extravagant and dramatically inappropriate language, though it is generally in the shape of quips, quibbles, puns, and metaphysical refinements, arising out of the very exuberance of his intellectual energy, that he sins against literary simplicity; very seldom indeed by decking out his verse with proper names, in the fashion above described. As to the surpassing grace, art, and truth to nature, which these comedies in various degrees exhibit, the limits of this work would be soon outstepped if we were to dwell on them.

Among the eleven tragedies are included some of the brightest and most wonderful achievements of the human intellect. In "Hamlet," with its fearful background of guilt, and lingering yet foreshadowed retribution, we see the tragic results which follow from — in the words of Goethe — "a great action being laid upon a soul unfit for its performance;" the unfitness consisting, according to Coleridge, in the want of a due balance "between the impressions from outward

objects, and the inward operations of the intellect; for, if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action." In "Macbeth," on the other hand, the action of the drama proceeds with a breathless rapidity. The first crime, engendered by that "vaulting ambition which doth o'erleap itself," necessitates the commission of others to avert the natural consequences of the first. A large part of a life is presented to our eyes in the light of one great, gilded, successful crime, until at last it topples over, and is quenched with the suddenness of an expiring rocket. In "King Lear," with its ever-thickening gloom and deepening sorrows, we see the tragic fate which, as the world of man is constituted, too often waits on folly no less than on guilt, and involves the innocent alike with the guilty in the train of terrible consequences. In "Othello," the drama opens with all the elements of happiness; manly courage, beauty, truth, devoted love, are met together in the pair who fought against all the powers of social prejudice in order to become one, and have conquered: yet all is marred by the fiendish wickedness of one man, who abuses the resources of a powerful intellect to practise on the open and impulsive nature of Othello, until he crushes, in an access of volcanic passion, the jewel which an instant after he would give the whole world to restore. In "Romeo and Juliet," all that is beautiful and all that is excessive are brought together. The loveliness of the Italian sky, the youthful grace of the lovers, the fair palaces and moonlit gardens of Verona, the hereditary and unforgiving hatred of the two noble houses, the whirlwind of passionate love which unites their two last surviving scions in the inextricable bond of an affection stronger than all the hatreds of their

ancestors, their final union in the tomb beyond the reach of severance by angry fathers or the chances of time — these are the materials of a drama which for pure literary beauty stands, perhaps, unsurpassed among intellectual creations. It is not, however, our purpose to attempt any thing like a general critical analysis of these, or any of Shakspeare's plays; nor, indeed, is it necessary. Genius furnished the text, and men of the greatest intellectual gifts have supplied the commentary. The reader will thank us for referring him to their works, rather than attempting to substitute an inferior article of our own.[1]

In the literatures of Greece and Rome, it is not to the dramatic, but to the epic poetry, that we must look for the exhibition of the peculiar pride and spirit of either nationality. Thus in the "Iliad," as Mr. Gladstone has eloquently shown,[2] the Greek character and the Greek religion are forcibly and favorably contrasted with those of Asia; and the "Æneid" is pervaded, as if by a perpetual under-song, by a constant stream of allusion to the greatness of Rome. In English poetry this spirit of nationality has sought its expression in the historical drama, and pre-eminently in the historical plays of Shakspeare. It is a noble series; commencing, in the chronological order, with "King John," and ending with "Henry VIII.;" omitting, however, the reigns of Henry III., the four Edwards, and Henry VII. The manful, proud spirit of English freedom is continually making itself visible; and, though it has been truly said that Shakspeare in

[1] The works particularly referred to as most generally accessible are, Coleridge's Literary Remains, Augustus Schlegel's Dramatic Literature, the chapters on Hamlet in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, and the works of Gervinus, Guizot, and Victor Hugo.

[2] In his work on Homer and the Homeric Age.

numberless allusions gives proof that he held in tender and reverential regard the old Catholic doctrines and usages of England's past, it is no less true that the very shadow or vestige of foreign interference on English ground, whether by ecclesiastical or secular authority, seems at once to suggest to him expressions of defiant scorn. Thus, in "King John" (Act iii., Scene 1), he makes the king say to Pandulph, —

> "Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
> So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
> To charge me to an answer as the pope.
> Tell him this tale; and, from the mouth of England,
> Add thus much more: That no Italian priest
> Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
> But as we under heaven are supreme head,
> So, under him, that great supremacy,
> Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
> Without the assistance of a mortal hand.
> So tell the pope; all reverence set apart
> To him and his usurped authority."

And, for a more general expression of the same feeling, take the concluding passage of the same play: —

> "This England never did nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> Now these her princes are come home again,
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
> If England to herself do rest but true."

As a matter of course, the unities of time and place are disregarded in these historical plays. The preservation even of the unity of action, in a number of plays adhering pretty faithfully to the order and manner of the events, is, as a general rule, impossible; nor has Shakspeare attempted it. In "Henry VIII.," for instance, his object seems merely to have been, to present

a succession of remarkable scenes founded on occurrences which happened in the first thirty years of that reign. These scenes are, the fall of Buckingham, the fall of Wolsey, the divorce and death of Queen Catherine, and the birth of Elizabeth. Patriotic feeling may be held to invest such a play in the spectator's mind, if only it be written in a lofty and worthy spirit, with a unity of design equal to any that art can frame. When, however, the events of a reign group themselves naturally into a dramatic whole, as in the case of Richard III., Shakspeare does not lose the opportunity of still further heightening the effect by his art; and there is, accordingly, not one of his plays more closely bound together in all its parts by the development of one main action than this. The unscrupulous and fearless ambition of Richard III., so different from the same passion as it appears in the conscience-haunted Macbeth, crushes successively beneath his feet, by fair means or foul, all the obstacles in his path; till the general abhorrence, springing out of that very moral sense which Richard despised and denied, swells to such a height as to embrace all classes, and crushes his iron will and indomitable courage, his schemes, throne, and person, beneath a force yet more irresistible.

It is usual to rank Ben Jonson next after Shakspeare among the dramatists of this age, chiefly on the ground of the merits of his celebrated comedy, "Every Man in his Humour," published in 1596. Yet the inferiority of Jonson to Shakspeare is immeasurable. It is true that he observes the "unities" (as he takes care to inform us in the prologue), and that the character of Capt. Bobadil, the bouncing braggart of the piece, though the original conception of it is found in Terence, and though it falls far short of the somewhat similar creation of "Ancient Pistol," abounds in fine strokes of humor.

But the characters generally do not impress one as substantial flesh-and-blood personages like those of Shakspeare, but rather as mere shadows, or personified humors, in which one cannot feel any lively interest. Real wit is rare in the piece; and of pure fun and merriment there is not a sparkle. Even the humor, although it has been so much admired, has scarcely any universal character about it; local turns of thought, and the passing mannerisms of the age, are its source and aliment.

Neither of the two completed tragedies which Ben Jonson left, "Sejanus" and "Catiline," was of much service to his fame.[1] The story of Sejanus, the powerful minister of Tiberius, is an excellent tragic subject; but Jonson, though he was learned about Roman manners and the externals of Roman life, failed to catch the spirit of the Roman character; its dignity on the one hand, its cold intellectual hardness on the other, he has not reproduced, nor apparently appreciated. "The Poetaster," a comical satire, is a drama in every way superior to "Sejanus." The scene is laid at the court of Augustus; Crispinus (by whom is intended the dramatist Thomas Dekker) and Demetrius Fannius are arraigned as bad and worthless poets and libellous scribblers; Crispinus, being condemned, has to swallow a purge, which makes him bring up a string of crude and flatulent words which he had been in the habit of using; and the two are sworn to keep the peace towards Horace and all other men of genius for the future. In this play there is more regularity in the verse, more measure in the conceptions, more appropriateness in the expressions, than are met with in "Sejanus;" the scene in which Augustus invites Virgil to read before the court a passage from the "Æneid" is really a noble picture.

Among the comedies, "Volpone" and "The Alchemist" are usually placed first. The first is the story of a wily Venetian nobleman, who, assisted by a confederate, feigns himself to be dying, in order to extract gifts from his rich acquaintances, each of whom is persuaded in his turn that he is named as sole heir in the sick man's

[1] Chief plays of Ben Jonson: Every Man in his Humor, Every Man out of his Humor, Volpone or the Fox, Epicœne or the Silent Woman, The Alchemist, Bartholomew Fair, comedies; The Poetaster and Cynthia's Revels, comical satires; Sejanus and Catiline, tragedies; The Sad Shepherd, a pastoral drama; Love freed from Ignorance and Folly, a masque.

will. It was this Volpone, between whose character and that of Lord Godolphin, Dr. Sacheverell, in his celebrated sermon, drew the audacious parallel which probably had a good deal to do with his prosecution. The workmanship of this piece is good, and the dialogue lively; but the characters are too uniformly weak or vicious to allow of the play taking a strong hold of the mind. In "The Alchemist," the knight, Sir Epicure Mammon, is the dupe of Subtle, the alchemist, by whom he is being really ruined, while supposing himself to be on the brink of the attainment of enormous wealth.

Out of forty-six extant plays, eleven are comedies, three comical satires, one a pastoral drama, only two (besides a fragment of a third) tragedies, and twenty-eight masques or other court entertainments; short pieces, in which, to a yet greater extent than in the modern opera, the words were of less importance than the music, decoration, dumb show, and other theatrical accessories.

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are written in a purer style and finer language, yet in both these respects they fall far below those of Shakspeare; and most of them are disfigured by a grossness of thought and expression which became more and more the besetting vice of the English stage. They are about fifty-four in number, fifteen of which seem to have been produced by the two friends in conjunction; the remainder are understood to have been by Fletcher alone. There is much fine writing in these plays; but they are marred even for reading, much more for acting, by their utter want of measure and sobriety; a defect partly due, perhaps, to the predilection of the authors for Spanish plots. The characters in "The Maid's Tragedy," one of the most famous among their tragedies, go to almost inconceivable lengths of extravagance. In the celebrated comedy of "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," the change which gradually comes over the wife, who has found a master where she meant to have a submissive

tool, is nobly and beautifully described; but this very change seems grossly improbable, when ensuing upon the utter moral corruption which possessed her at the first. The versification of these plays is, as a general rule, much less musical and regular than that of Shakspeare.[1]

Of the plays of Philip Massinger, eighteen are preserved, — six tragedies, eight comedies, and four tragicomedies. The famous play of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" still keeps possession of the stage, for the sake of the finely-drawn character of Sir Giles Overreach. Massinger's plays were carefully and ably edited by Gifford in 1813. He seems to have been a retiring, amiable man, ill fitted to battle with the rough theatrical world on which he was thrown. He could compose a fine piece of theatrical declamation, and arrange situations which proved very effective on the stage, as we see in the long popular tragedy of "The Virgin Martyr." But for the creation of character, in the Shakspearian way, he had no vocation; his personages are not fashioned and developed from within outwards, but take up or change a course of action, rather because the exigencies of the plot so require, than because the action and reaction between their natures and external circumstances constrain them so to behave.

"The Virgin Martyr" has telling situations, and was extremely popular in its day. The martyr is Dorothea, a Christian maiden of the age of Diocletian. Antonius, who is in love with Dorothea, is finely drawn. There is little reality in the other characters. There is no intrinsic reason laid in the nature of Theophilus, as developed

[1] Chief plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Philaster, The Maid's Tragedy, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, King and No King, The Scornful Lady. Of Fletcher alone: The Elder Brother, The Beggar's Bush, Rule a Wife and have a Wife, The Faithful Shepherdess.

up to the end of the fourth act, to account for his turning Christian in the fifth, any more than is the case with Sapritius or Sempronius.[1]

John Ford, a native of Devonshire, and born in 1586, was bred to the law, though he never seems to have made any thing of a career in that profession. His first play, "The Lover's Melancholy," was produced in 1629; his last, "The Lady's Trial," in 1639. From this date he disappears from our view. The plots of his finest tragedies are so horrible and revolting that it has long ceased to be possible to produce them on the stage. Ford's command of language, and power of presenting and suitably conducting tragic situations, are very great. He wrote a portion of a once famous play, "The Witch of Edmonton," in conjunction with Rowley and Dekker.

In "The Broken Heart" we have a smooth and cheerful opening; but the fourth and fifth acts bring down a very shower of horrors. In the fourth, King Amyclas dies; Panthea starves herself to death; and Orgilus her lover treacherously kills her brother Ithocles, by whom he had been prevented from marrying her. In the fifth, Calantha, the daughter of Amyclas, who had been betrothed to Ithocles, dies of a "broken heart;" and Orgilus, allowed to choose the manner of his death, opens his veins with his own dagger. The language in this play is often intricate and obscure, which is the less excusable in Ford, because he could write with a beautiful clearness and simplicity. Nine plays by Ford have survived, of which four are tragedies, two tragi-comedies, one a masque, one ("Perkin Warbeck") an historical play, and one a comedy.[2]

Of John Webster, the author of a famous tragedy called "The Duchess of Malfi," not even so much as

[1] Chief plays of Massinger: The Virgin Martyr, The Fatal Dowry, tragedies; The Maid of Honor, A Very Woman, The Bashful Lover, tragi-comedies; A New Way to Pay Old Debts, The City Madam, comedies.

[2] Chief plays of Ford: The Broken Heart. Love's Sacrifice, The Lover's Melancholy, The Lady's Trial, The Fancies Chaste and Noble.

the year of his birth is known. The period of his greatest popularity and acceptance as a dramatist was about 1620. Eight of his plays have been preserved, of several of which he was only part author. The three tragedies are exclusively his; and it is upon these that his fame rests. The plot of "The Duchess of Malfi" turns upon the virtuous affection conceived by the duchess for her steward Antonio, — an affection which, by wounding the pride of her family, involves both its object and herself in ruin.

John Marston was born about the year 1575. What little is known of him is gathered almost entirely from stray allusions in the works of his contemporaries. In conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden, Ben Jonson spoke contemptuously of Marston, and said that he had fought him several times. He is the author of eight plays, the chief of which is "The Malcontent," a tragi-comedy. Besides these, he was part author, with Jonson and Chapman, of the comedy of "Eastward Hoe," which contained such stinging sarcasms upon the Scotch that all three were thrown into prison.

Chapman has left us eight comedies and four tragedies, among which the tragedy of "Bussy d'Amboise" is the most noted. Even of this Dryden says, in the dedication to his "Spanish Friar," "A famous modern poet used to sacrifice every year a *statius* to Virgil's manes, and I have indignation enough to burn a 'd'Amboise' annually to the memory of Jonson."

Some mention must be made of Thomas Dekker, the butt, as we have seen, of Jonson's satire in "The Poetaster." Dekker replied vigorously to the attack in his comedy of "Satiro-mastix; or, the Untrussing the Humorous Poet," in which Ben Jonson is introduced as "Young Horace." He wrote several other plays, in

whole or in part; with Webster he produced "Westward Hoe" and "Northward Hoe," and assisted Middleton in "The Roaring Girl." Dekker is also the author of several satirical tracts; e.g., "News from Hell," and "The Guls Hornbook," which throw great light on the manners of the age.

Thomas Heywood, a most prolific writer, is the author of one very famous play, "A Woman Killed with Kindnesse" (1617). The story closely resembles that of Kotzebue's play of "The Stranger:" an unfaithful wife, overcome by the inexhaustible goodness of her injured but forgiving husband, droops and expires in the rush of contending emotions — shame, remorse, penitence, and gratitude — which distract her soul. Thomas Middleton wrote, in whole or in part, a large number of plays; Mr. Dyce's edition of his works comprises twenty-two dramas and eleven masques. Of these "The Familie of Love" and "The Witch" (from which Shakspeare may have derived a suggestion or two for the witches in "Macbeth") have been singled out for praise. William Rowley seems to have preferred writing acts in other men's plays to inventing or adapting plots for himself; thus we find him taking part in "The Old Law" with Massinger and Middleton, and in "The Spanish Gipsie" with Middleton. There is much powerful writing in Cyril Tourneur's tragedy of "The Atheist's Revenge."

When we look into the private life of these Elizabethan dramatists, we too often find it a wild scene of irregular activity and unbridled passion, of improvidence and embarrassment, of fits of diligence alternating with the saturnalia of a loose and reckless gayety, of unavailing regrets cut short by early death. Yet we must not judge them harshly, for they fell upon an age of transition and revolution. The ancient church,

environed as it was with awe and mystery, — spreading into unknown depths and distances in time and space, which might be resisted, but could not be despised, — had passed from the land like a dream; and the new institution which the will of the nation had substituted for it, whatever might be its merits, could not as yet curb the pride, nor calm the passions, nor dazzle the imagination, of England's turbulent and gifted youth. True, Catholicism, in disappearing, had left solid moral traditions behind it, which the better English mind, naturally serious and conscientious, faithfully adhered to and even developed; but the playwrights and wits, or at any rate the great majority of them, plunged in the immunities and irregularities of a great city, and weak with the ductile temperament of the artist, were generally outside the sphere of these traditions.

The last of this race of dramatists was James Shirley. His first play, "Love Tricks," appeared in 1625; and scarcely a year passed between that date and 1642 in which he did not bring a new drama upon the stage. In November, 1642, the Long Parliament passed a resolution by which, in consideration of the disturbed state of the country, the London theatres were closed. Out of the thirty dramas comprised in Mr. Dyce's edition, six are tragedies, four tragi-comedies, and twenty comedies. The plots of more than half of these are of Italian or Spanish origin; most of the rest are drawn from contemporary English life. "In the greater part of Shirley's dramas," says Mr. Hallam, "we find the favorite style of that age, the characters foreign and of elevated rank, the interest serious but not always of buskined dignity, the catastrophe fortunate; all, in short, that has gone under the vague appellation of tragi-comedy." It must be admitted in Shirley's favor, that though his incidents are often coarse, and his dia-

logue licentious, his poetical justice is most often soundly administered; in the end, vice suffers and virtue is rewarded. He was burnt out in the great fire of 1666; and the discomfort and distress thus brought upon him are said to have caused his death. Besides his regular dramas, Shirley is the author of several moral plays, masques, and short plays for exhibition in private houses or schools. At the end of a performance of this kind, which seems to have been the last dramatic piece he ever wrote, "The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses," occurs the noble choral ode beginning "The glories of our blood and state," which is printed in Percy's "Reliques," and many other collections.[1]

The invectives of the Puritans against theatrical entertainments during all this period became ever louder and more vehement, creating by their extravagance a counter license and recklessness in the dramatists, and again justified in their turn, or partly so, by their excesses. At last, in 1643, after the civil war had broken out, the Puritan party became the masters of the situation, and the theatres were closed. This date brings us down some way into the succeeding period.

Prose Writing: Novels, Essays, Criticism.

The prose literature of this period is not less abundant and various than the poetry. We meet now with novelists, pamphleteers, and essayists for the first time. Lodge wrote several novels, from one of which, "Rosalind," Shakspeare took the plot of "As You Like it." Lyly published his "Euphues" in 1578; and the "Arcadia" of Sir Philip Sidney appeared after the

[1] Chief plays of Shirley: "The Maid's Revenge," "The Politician," "The Cardinal," tragedies; "The Ball," "The Gamester," "The Bird in a Cage" (which has an ironical dedication to William Prynne), "The Lady of Pleasure," comedies.

author's death in 1590. This tedious pastoral romance is the fruit of the revival of letters, and of the influence of Italian literature. It was evidently suggested by the "Arcadia" of Sanazzaro, a Neapolitan poet, who died in the year 1530. Now, too, the literature of travel and adventure, which began with old Sir John Maundevile, and has attained to such vast proportions among us in modern times, was placed on a broad and solid pedestal of recorded fact by the work of Richard Hakluyt, a Herefordshire man, who in 1589 published a collection of voyages made by Englishmen "at any time" (as he states on the titlepage) "within the compass of these fifteen hundred years." Purchas' "Pilgrimage," of which the third edition is dated 1617, will occur to many as the book in which Coleridge had been reading before he dreamt the dream of "Kubla Khan." Samuel Purchas was the clergyman of St. Martin's, Ludgate, and a stanch upholder of Episcopacy. In the epistle dedicatory, addressed to Archbishop Bancroft, after saying that he had consulted above twelve hundred authors in the composition of the work, and explaining what those would find in it who sought for information simply, he proceeds, "Others may hence learn . . . two lessons fitting these times, the unnaturalness of faction and atheism; that law of nature having written in the practice of all men . . . the profession of some religion, and in that religion, wheresoever any society of priests or religious persons are or have been in the world, no admittance of *Parite;* the angels in heaven, divels in hell (as the royallest of fathers, the father of our country, hath pronounced), and all religions on earth, as here we show, being equally subject to inequality, that is, to the equitie of subordinate order. And, if I live to finish the rest, I hope to show the *Paganism* of anti-chris-

tian Popery," &c. Without being a follower of M. Comte, one may be of opinion that the mental condition of those who could carry on, or assent to the carrying on, of anthropological researches in the temper of mind avowed by honest Purchas, needed a large infusion of the *esprit positif*.[1]

The genius of Montaigne raised up English imitators of his famous work, one of whom was afterwards to eclipse his original. Francis Bacon published a small volume entitled "Essayes, Religious Meditations, Places of Perswasion and Disswasion," in 1597. These were again published, with large additions, in 1612; and again, similarly augmented, in 1625, under the title of "Essayes, or Counsels Civill and Moral."[2] In the dedication to this edition, Lord Bacon writes, "I do now publish my "Essayes," which of all my other workes have beene most currant; for that, as it seemes, they come home to men's businesse and bossomes. I have enlarged them both in number and weight, so that they are indeed a new work." The "Essays," in this their final shape, were immediately translated into French, Italian, and Latin.

At the end of the present period, an Oxford student, fond of solitude and the learned dust of great libraries, produced a strange, multifarious book, which he called "The Anatomy of Melancholy." Robert Burton lived for some thirty years in his rooms at Christ Church,

[1] The full title of this curious old book is, "Purchas, his Pilgrimage, or, Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages and Places discovered, from the Creation unto this Present. In four parts. This First contayneth a Theological and Geographical History of Asia, Africa, and America, with the islands adjacent." Besides, the religions, ancient and modern (which, he says, are his principal aim), he undertakes to describe the chief rarities and wonders of nature and art in all the countries treated of.

[2] See p. 513.

much like a monk in his cell, reading innumerable books on all conceivable subjects, "but to little purpose," as he himself admits, "for want of good method;" and could hit on no better mode of utilizing his labors than by completing, or attempting to complete, a design which the Greek philosopher Democritus is recorded to have entertained, — that of writing a scientific treatise on melancholy. Burton had an odd sort of humor, and an idle hour may be whiled away pleasantly enough by opening his book almost anywhere; but, as for science, it is not to writers of his stamp that one must go for that.

The deeper culture of the time displayed itself in the earliest attempts in our language at literary and æsthetic criticism. George Gascoyne, the poet, led the way with a short tract entitled, "Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme in English:" this appeared in 1575. William Webbe is the author of a "Discourse of English Poetrie," published in 1586; a work of little value. But in 1589 appeared the "Arte of English Poesie" of Puttenham, a gentleman pensioner at the court of Elizabeth; a work distinguished by much shrewdness and good sense, and containing, as Warton's pages testify, a quantity of minute information about English poetry in the sixteenth century, which cannot be found elsewhere. But, among all such works, Sir Philip Sidney's "Defence of Poesy," written about 1584, stands pre-eminent. Chaucer's diction was antiquated; Surrey and Wyat were refined versifiers, rather than poets; the sun of Spenser had but just risen, and, as people are apt to hold cheap that in which they do not excel, it seems that the English literary public at this time were disposed to regard poetry as a frivolous and useless exercise of the mind, unworthy to engage the attention of those who could betake them-

selves to philosophy or history. A work embodying these opinions, entitled "The School of Abuse," was written by Stephen Gosson in 1579, and dedicated to Sidney; and it seems not improbable that this work was the immediate occasion which called forth "The Defence of Poesy." In this really noble and beautiful treatise, which, moreover, has the merit of being very short, Sir Philip seeks to call his countrymen to a better mind, and vindicates the pre-eminence of the poet, as a seer, a thinker, and a maker.[1]

It has been discovered[2] that from this period dates the first regular newspaper, though it did not as yet contain domestic intelligence. "The first news-pamphlet which came out at regular intervals appears to have been that entitled 'The News of the Present Week,' edited by Nathaniel Butler; which was started in 1622, in the early days of the Thirty Years' War, and was continued, in conformity with its title, as a weekly publication."

History: Holinshed, Camden, Lord Bacon, Speed, Knolles, Raleigh, Foxe.

Continuing in the track of the chroniclers mentioned in the last chapter, Raphael Holinshed, and his colleague William Harrison, produced their well-known "Description and History of England, Scotland, and Ireland," in 1577. Since the revival of learning, familiarity with the works of Strabo and other Greek geographers had caused geography to become a popular study; and, among the evidences of this in England, the topographical portions of this chronicle are perhaps the most important that we have come to since the "Itinerarium" of Leland, though superseded a few years later by the far more celebrated and valuable work known as

[1] See p. 516. [2] Craik, vol. iv. p. 97.

Camden's "Britannia." It would be unfair to say a word in dispraise of the style of this Description, since its author, Harrison, throws himself ingenuously on the reader's mercy, in words which remind one of the immortal Dogberry's anxiety to be to be "written down an ass." "If your honour," he says (the book is addressed to Lord Cobham), "regard the substance of that which is here declared, I must needs confesse that it is none of mine owne; but, if your lordship have consideration of the barbarous composition showed herein, that I may boldly claime and challenge for mine owne; sith there is no man of any so slender skill, that will defraud me of that reproach, which is due unto me, for the meere negligence, disorder, and evil disposition of matter comprehended in the same." Of Holinshed, the author of the historical portions, very little is known; but the total absence of the critical spirit in his work seems to show that he could not have belonged to the general literary fraternity of Europe, since that spirit was already rife and operative on the Continent. Ludovicus Vives, for instance, a Spaniard, and a fellow-worker with Erasmus and other emancipators of literature and taste, had expressed disbelief in the fable of Brute, the legendary founder of the British monarchy, many years before; yet Holinshed quietly translates all the trash that he found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, about that and other mythical personages, as if it were so much solid history. The extent to which, in the sixteenth century, credulity still darkened the historic field, may be judged of from a few facts. Thus Holinshed lays it down as probable that Britain was peopled long before the deluge. These primitive Britons he supposes to have been all drowned in the flood; he then attributes the re-peopling of the island to Samothes, the son of Japhet, son of Noah. The population

being scanty, it was providentially recruited by the arrival of the fifty daughters of Danaus, a king of Egypt, who, having all killed their husbands, were sent adrift in a ship, and carried by the winds to Britain. This, however, Holinshed admits to be doubtful; but the arrival of Ulysses on our shores he is ready to vouch for; and he favorably considers the opinion that the name of Albion was derived from a huge giant of that name, who took up his abode here, the son of Neptune, god of the seas. Then as to Brute, the great-grandson of Æneas, Holinshed no more doubts about his existence, nor that from him comes the name of Britain, than he doubts that Elizabeth succeeded Mary. Such were among the consequences of the manner in which the uncritical writers of the middle ages had jumbled history, theology, and philosophy all up together. Nevertheless the chronicles of Holinshed, being written in an easy and agreeable style, became a popular book. They were reprinted, with a continuation, in 1587; they found in Shakspeare a diligent reader; and they were again reprinted in 1807.

It was not long before the judicial office of the historian began to be better understood. William Camden, now scarcely thought of except as an antiquary, was in truth a trained and ripe scholar, and an intelligent student of history. England has more reason to be proud of him than of many whose names are more familiar to our ears. The man who won the friendship of the president De Thou, and corresponded on equal terms with that eminent historian, as also with Casaubon and Lipsius abroad, and Usher and Spelman at home, must have possessed solid and extraordinary merits. His "Britannia," a work on the topography of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with the isles adjacent, enriched with historical illustrations, first appeared

in 1586, while he was an under-master at Westminster School. In 1604 he published his "Reliquiæ Britannicæ," a treatise on the early inhabitants of Britain. In this work, undeterred by the sham array of authorities which had imposed upon Holinshed, he "blew away sixty British kings with one blast."[1] Burleigh, the great statesman of the reign of Elizabeth, the Cavour of the sixteenth century, singled out Camden as the fittest man in all England to write the history of the first thirty years of the queen's reign, and intrusted to him, for that purpose, a large mass of state papers. Eighteen years elapsed before Camden discharged the trust. At last, in 1615, his "History, or Annals of England during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth," made its appearance. "The love of truth," he says in the preface, "has been the only incitement to me to undertake this work." The studied impartiality of De Thou had made this language popular among historians, and Camden probably fancied at the moment that he had no other motive; but, to say nothing of the "incitement" administered by Lord Burleigh, his own words, a little farther on, show that the "scandalous libels" published in foreign parts against the late queen and the English Government, formed a powerful stimulus. In short, his history must be taken as a vindication, but in a more moderate tone than was then usual, of the Protestant policy of England since the accession of Elizabeth. Its value would be greater than it is, but for his almost uniform neglect to quote his authorities for the statements he makes. This fact, coupled to the discovery, in our own times, of many new and independent sources of information, to him unknown, has caused his labors to be much disregarded.

Lord Bacon's "History of the Reign of Henry VII.,"

[1] Speed.

published in 1622, is in many ways a masterly work. With the true philosophic temper, he seeks, not content with a superficial narrative of events, to trace out and exhibit their causes and connections; and hence he approaches to the modern conception of history, as the record of the development of peoples, rather than of the actions of princes and other showy personages.[1]

The writers of literary history have been unjust to John Speed, whom it is the custom to speak of as a dull, plodding chronicler. Speed was much more than this. His "Historie of Great Britain" exhibits, in a very striking way, the rapid growth of that healthy scepticism which is one of the essential qualifications of the historian. The nonsense which Holinshed, as we have seen, had received from his predecessors, and innocently retailed, respecting the early history of Britain, Speed disposes of with a few blunt words. A supposed work of Berosus, on which Holinshed, following Bishop Bale, relied for the details he entered into respecting the antediluvian period, had been proved to be an impudent forgery: Speed therefore extinguishes Samothes, the daughters of Danaus, Ulysses, &c., without ceremony. Next he presumes to doubt, if not to deny, the existence of "Albion the giant." But a more audacious piece of scepticism remains. Speed does not believe in Brute, and by implication denies that we English are descended from the Trojans; an article which, all through the middle ages, was believed in with a firm, undoubting faith. After giving the evidence for and against the legend in great detail, and with perfect fairness, he gives judgment himself on the side of reason; and, with regard to the Trojan descent, advises Britons to "disclaim that which bringeth no honor to so renowned a nation." The same rationality displays

[1] See p. 487.

itself as the history proceeds. Holinshed speaks in a sort of gingerly way of the miracles attributed to St. Dunstan, as if, on the one hand, the extraordinary character of some of them staggered even him; while, on the other, his natural credulity compelled him to swallow them. But honest Speed brushes out of his path all these pious figments. "As for angels singing familiarly unto him," he says, "and divels in the shape of dogs, foxes, and beares, whipped by him, that was but ordinary; as likewise his making the she-divell to roare, when, coming to tempt him in shape of a beautiful lasse, he caught her by the nose with hot burning pincers, and so spoilde a good face. But to leave these figments wherewith our monkish stories are stuffed," &c.

The complimentary verses printed, as the custom then was, at the beginning of the second edition of the work, show that Speed was warmly admired by a circle of contemporary students, who took an eager interest in his labors. This fact, and the rudiments of a sound historical criticism contained in his history, entitle us to conjecture, that, had no disturbing influences intervened, the English school of historians, which numbered at this time men like Speed, and Knolles, and Camden in its ranks, would have progressively developed its powers, and attained to ever wider views, until it had thought out all those critical principles which it was actually left to Niebuhr and the Germans to discover. But the civil war came, and broke the thread of research. The strong intellects that might otherwise have applied themselves to the task of establishing canons of evidence, and testing the relative credibility of various historical materials, were compelled to enter into the arena of political action, and to work and fight either for king or parliament. We cannot complain: one nation cannot do all that the race requires. Contented

to have immensely accelerated, by our civil war and its incidents, the progress of political freedom in Europe, we must resign to Germany that philosophical pre-eminence which, had the English intellect peacefully expanded itself during the seventeenth century, we might possibly have contested with her.

Another excellent and painstaking writer of the school was Richard Knolles, a former fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, who published in 1610 his "General Historie of the Turks." It was the first complete history of this people that had appeared; and the interest of the undertaking lay, in the opinion of the author, in the "fatal mutations" which this warlike nation had in a short time brought upon a great part of the world. In the mournful list of conquests from Christendom which he records, the only names of countries that have been since reconquered are Hungary, Greece, and Algeria; but the European mind had not, in 1610, become indifferent, from long custom, to the ruin of so many Christian communities, recently flourishing in Asia Minor and Roumelia.

The versatility of Raleigh's powers was something marvellous; nevertheless it must be admitted, that when he undertook to write the "History of the World,"[1] commencing at the creation, he miscalculated his powers. No one, indeed, would bear hardly on a work, the labors of which must have relieved many a cheerless and lonely hour in that dark prison-cell in the Tower, in which one may still stand, and muse on the indomitable spirit of its inmate. The book, however, has certainly been overpraised. It is full of that uncritical sort of learning, which, with all its elaborate theories and solemn discussions, we, in the nineteenth century, know to be absolutely worthless. The hundred and thirty-eighth page is

[1] See p. 485.

reached before the reader is let out of the Garden of Eden. Deucalion's flood is gravely treated as an historical event, the date of which is pretty certain; a similar view is taken of the "flood of Ogyges," which, by a stupendous process of argumentation, is *proved* to have taken place exactly five hundred and eighty years after that of Noah. A voluminous disquisition follows, with the object of proving that the ark did *not* rest on Mount Ararat, but upon some part of the Caucasus. At the end of four hundred and eleven pages, we have only reached the reign of Semiramis, B.C. 2000, or thereabouts. Proceeding at this rate, it was obviously impossible, even though the scale of the narrative is gradually contracted, that within the ordinary term of a human life the work should be carried down beyond the Christian era. It closes, in fact, about the year B.C. 170, with the final subjugation of Macedon by the Romans. That there are eloquent and stirring passages in the book, no one will deny; yet they mostly appear in connection with a theory of history, which, though commonly held in Raleigh's day, has long ceased to be thought adequate to cover the facts. That theory, a legacy from the times when all departments of human knowledge were overshadowed and intruded upon by theology, is fully stated in the preface. It deals with history as being didactic, rather than expository; as if its proper office were to teach moral lessons, the most important of these being, that God always requites virtuous and vicious princes in this world according to their deserts, — that "ill-doing hath always been attended with ill-success." History, on this view, became a sort of department of preaching. The one-sidedness of the theory, and the special pleading of its advocates, after eliciting counter extravagances from Machiavel and Hobbes, drew down, in the "Candide," the withering mockery of Voltaire.

The appearance of the first edition of Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," commonly called "The Book of Martyrs," in 1561, is yet more an historical than a literary event. Of this work, filling three bulky folio volumes, nine standard editions were called for between its first publication and the year 1684; and it is impossible to exaggerate the effect which its thrilling narratives of the persecutions and burnings of the Protestants under Mary had in weakening the hold of the ancient Church on the general English heart. The style is plain and manly, the language vigorous and often coarse; but it was thereby only rendered the more effective for its immediate purpose. It is now, indeed, well understood that Foxe was a rampant bigot, and, like all of his class, utterly unscrupulous in assertion; the falsehoods, misrepresentations, and exaggerations to which he gave circulation, are endless. Take, for instance, his account of the death of Wolsey, which we know from the testimony of George Cavendish, an eye-witness, to be a string of pure unmitigated falsehoods. "It is testified by one, yet being alive, in whose armes the said Cardinall died, that his body being dead was black as pitch, also was so heavie that six could scarce beare it. Furthermore, it did so stinke above the ground, that they were constrained to hasten the burial thereof in the night season before it was day. At the which burial such a tempest with such a stinke there arose, that all the torches went out, and so hee was throwne into the tombe, and there was laied." Such foul slanderous hearsays it was Foxe's delight and care to incorporate by dozens in his work: no weapon came amiss, if a Catholic prelate was the object aimed at. Mr. Maitland, in a series of pamphlets,[1] has examined a number of

[1] The first of the series was entitled, Six Letters on Foxe's Acts and Monuments, 1837.

these, proved their falsehood, and established the general unreliability of the martyrologist. Nevertheless the book achieved its end, and perhaps deserved to do so; since the cruelties of the Marian persecution were, after all, indisputable facts, and a detailed and spicy narrative of these horrors, by one who was not cool enough to mince his words or weigh his statements, could alone inspire the general population with that abhorrence for the Roman Catholic persecution of Protestants, which was the necessary germ whence grew the principle that condemned religious persecution altogether.

The first volume, beginning with the persecutions directed against the early Church, professes to trace, according to a favorite doctrine of the Reformers, the history of a faithful and suffering remnant, — the pure Church of Christ, which retained the unadulterated gospel in the midst of the idolatrous corruptions introduced by the official Church, down across the dark and middle ages, through the Waldenses, the Albigenses, Wyclif, Huss, and Oldcastle, to the brighter times of Luther and Cranmer. This volume ends with the accession of Henry VIII. The second volume includes the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI.; the third is chiefly taken up with the records of the persecution under Mary.

Theology: Jewel, Hooker, Andrewes, Translations of the Bible.

In the grave works resulting from profound thought and learning, not less than in the creations of the imaginative faculty, the buoyant and progressive character of the period may be traced. To speak first of theology: even the Catholic controversialists, whose business it was to dam up the torrent, seem to catch the contagion of the time's enthusiasm. Allen and Parsons wrote and

combated with a hopeful pugnacity, not found in the Gothers and Challoners of a later age. Driven from the old universities, they founded English colleges for the education of priests at Rome and Douay; they labored to keep up their communications all over England; they formed plots; they exposed the doctrinal and liturgical compromises in which the new Anglican Church had its beginning; they would not believe but that all would ultimately come right again, and the nation repent of its wild aberrations from Catholic and papal unity.

The partisans of the Reformation split, as the reign went on, into two great sections, — the Puritans, and the Church party, or Prelatists, as they were nicknamed by their opponents. The leading men among the former had been in exile during the persecution in Mary's reign, and returned home full of admiration for the doctrines and church polity of Calvin, which last they had seen in full operation at Geneva. Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, was one of these. His famous "Apology," published in 1562, is Calvinistic in its theology; but the fact of his being able, though with some scruples of conscience, to accept a bishopric, proves that the differences between the two parties about Church government were not as yet held to be vital. "The Apology," which was directed against Rome, and originally written in Latin, drew forth a reply from the Jesuit Harding; to which Jewel rejoined, in his "Defence of the Apology," a long and labored work in English.

While Grindal was archbishop, the deviations of the Puritan clergy from the established liturgy were to some extent connived at. But upon the appointment of Whitgift, in 1583, a man of great energy and a strict disciplinarian, uniformity was everywhere enforced; and the Puritans saw no alternative before them, but

either to accept a form of church government of which they doubted the lawfulness, and acquiesce in practices which they detested as relics of Popery (such as the sign of the cross at baptism, the use of vestments, the retention of fast and feast days, &c.), or else to give up their ministry in the Church. Before deciding on the latter course, they tried the effect of putting forth various literary statements of their case. Of these the most important were the "Admonition" of Cartwright, and the "Ecclesiastica Disciplina" of Travers. These works drew forth from the Church party a memorable response, in the "Ecclesiastical Polity" of Richard Hooker. This celebrated man, who never attained to a higher ecclesiastical rank than that of a simple clergyman in the diocese of Canterbury, published the first four books of his treatise of "Ecclesiastical Polity" in 1594; the fifth book followed in 1597. His life by Izaak Walton is one of our most popular biographies; but it used to be remarked by the late Dr. Arnold, that the gentle, humble, unworldly pastor brought before us by Walton is quite unlike the strong, majestic character suggested by the works themselves. The general object of the treatise was to defend the Established Church, its laws, rites, and ceremonies, from the attacks of the Puritans. These attacks reduced themselves to two principal heads; first, that the episcopal government of the church and the temporal status of bishops, together with all laws connected with and upholding this system, as not being laid down in Scripture, were therefore unlawful, and ought to be exchanged for the Presbyterian system, which they maintained was so laid down; second, that many of the rites and practices enjoined by the rubric were superstitious and Popish, and ought to be abolished. To the first position Hooker replies by establishing the distinction between natural

and positive law, — the former being essentially immutable; the latter, even though commanded by God himself for special purposes and at particular times, essentially mutable. Thence he argues, that, even if the Puritans could prove their Presbyterian form of church government to be laid down in Scripture, it would not follow (since such form was, after all, a part of positive law), that for cogent reasons and by lawful authority it might not be altered. The philosophical analysis of law, which the course of his argument renders necessary, is the most masterly and also the most eloquent portion of the treatise. To the second head of objections Hooker replies by endeavoring to trace all the rites and practices complained of to the primitive and uncorrupted church of the first four centuries. His great familiarity with the writings of the fathers gave him an advantage here over his less learned opponents; yet at the same time the minuteness of the details, coupled with the comparative obsoleteness of the questions argued, renders this latter portion of the work less permanently valuable than the first four books. The sixth book, as Mr. Keble has proved,[1] is lost to us, all but a few of the opening paragraphs; the remainder of the book, as it now stands, being a fragment upon a totally different subject from that treated of in the original, though undoubtedly composed by Hooker. The seventh and eighth books belong to the original design, but were published long after Hooker's death, from MSS. left unrevised and in a disorderly condition.

In the reign of James, Dr. Donne and Bishop Andrewes were the chief writers of the Episcopalian party. The re-action against the encroaching self-asserting spirit of Puritanism, joined to the perception

[1] In the introduction to his excellent edition of Hooker's Works, Oxford, 1842.

that the controversy with the Catholics could not be carried on upon the narrow Puritan grounds, nor without reference to the past history of the Church, led back about this time the ablest and best men among the Anglican divines to the study of the primitive ages, and the writings of the fathers. Donne, Andrewes, and Laud, as afterwards Bull, Pearson, Taylor, and Barrow, were deeply read in ecclesiastical literature. James I. prided himself on his theological profundity. His "Basilicon Doron," or advice to his son Prince Henry, published in 1599, contains far more of theological argument than of moral counsel. His "Apology for the Oath of Allegiance," written in 1605, to justify the imposition upon English Catholics of the new oaths framed after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, drew forth an answer from Bellarmine, under the feigned name of Matthew Tortus. To the strictures of the cardinal, a reply appeared with the curious title of "Tortura Torti," from the pen of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester. This good and able man, in whom an earnest piety was united to a quick and sparkling wit and an unflagging industry, was of humble parentage; but, by sheer weight and force of character, he gained the intimacy and confidence of three sovereigns, — Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. He was one of the translators of the Bible in the time of James; the portion assigned to him and his company being the Pentateuch, and the historical books from Joshua to the end of the Second Book of Kings. He died in 1626, and was lamented in a beautiful Latin elegy by Milton, then a young student at Cambridge.

The authorized English version of the Scriptures was the work of the reign of James. "Forty-seven persons, in six companies, meeting at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge, distributed the labor among

them; twenty-five being assigned to the Old Testament, fifteen to the New, seven to the Apocrypha. The rules imposed for their guidance by the king were designed, as far as possible, to secure the text against any novel interpretation; the translation called 'The Bishops' Bible' being established as the basis, as those still older had been in that; and the work of each person or company being subjected to the review of the rest. The translation, which was commenced in 1607, was published in 1611." [1] "The Bishops' Bible," named in the above extract, was a translation prepared in the early part of Elizabeth's reign, under the supervision of Archbishop Parker, and published in 1567. In this, also, earlier translations had been pretty closely followed; so that there can be no doubt that the English of the authorized version is considerably more antique in character than that of the generation in which it appeared. Of a few expressions — such as "wist ye not," "strait" for narrow, "strawed," "charger," "emerods," "receipt of custom," and the like — the meaning may perhaps be thus obscured for the uneducated. But, on the whole, the beautiful simplicity and easy idiomatic flow of the authorized version render it a people's book, and a model for translators; while the strength and dignity of its style have probably operated for good upon English prose writing ever since.

Philosophy: Lord Bacon, his Method, "The Advancement of Learning."

In the early part of the seventeenth century, the philosophy and science taught at the intellectual centres of the country — Oxford and Cambridge — differed little from those which the great schoolmen of the middle

[1] Hallam's Literature of Europe, vol. ii. p. 463.

age had invented or transmitted. That is to say, logic and moral philosophy — the one investigating the reasoning process, the other the different qualities of human actions — were taught according to the system of Aristotle; rhetoric was studied as a practical application of logic; and mathematics, more as an intellectual exercise, than as an instrument for the investigation of nature. The physical sciences, so far as they were studied at all, were treated in an off-hand manner, as if they were already tolerably complete; and being still overlaid with metaphysical notions, which gave the show without the reality of knowledge, were unable to make effectual progress. For instance, the old fourfold division of causes into material, formal, efficient, and final, instead of being regarded as what it really is, — a useful temporary formula to introduce clearness into our own conceptions, — was still supposed to be actually inherent in the nature of things, and was made the basis for the formation of distinct departments of knowledge. In the seventeenth century, the human mind, even among the most advanced communities, had still much of the presumptuous forwardness natural to children and savages. The complexity of natural phenomena was partly unknown, partly under-estimated. Instead of sitting down humbly as a disciple, and endeavoring to decipher here and there a few pages of Nature's book, man still conceived himself to stand immeasurably above Nature, and to possess within his own resources, if the proper key could only be found, the means of unlocking all her secrets, and compelling her subservience to his wants.

If Bacon's philosophical labors had been of no other service than to beat down this presumptuous temper, and explode this notion of the finality of science, they must have been regarded as of inestimable value. He

shared to the full in the eager and sanguine temper which we have shown to be characteristic of the age; he takes for his motto "Plus Ultra;" he revels in the view of the immensity of the field lying open before the human faculties, and the titlepage of the original edition of his "Instauratio Magna" bears the meaning portraiture of a ship in full sail, with a consort following in her wake, bearing down to pass between the fabled Pillars of Hercules, the limit of the knowledge, and almost of the aspirations, of the ancient world. He repeats more than once that in the sciences "opinion of store is found to be one of the chief causes of want." He is unjust, indeed, in attributing this presumptuous persuasion of the completeness of science to Aristotle, whom he sometimes strangely depreciates, even going so far as to say, that, in the general wreck of learning consequent upon the invasion of the empire by the barbarians, the flimsy and superficial character of Aristotle's system buoyed it up, when the more solid and valuable works of the earlier philosophers perished. It is true that those who had attempted to philosophize, ever since the time of Aristotle, had been most unduly influenced by his great name, and had often acquiesced blindly in his conclusions. Aristotle, however, is not justly chargeable with the errors of his followers.

It is clear that Bacon was keenly alive to the comparative worthlessness of all that had been done by the philosophers who preceded him towards a real knowledge of nature. What made him prize this knowledge so highly? Not so much its own intrinsic value, nor even its effects on the mind receiving it, as the persuasion which he felt, that, if obtained, it would give to man an effective command over nature. For his aim in philosophizing was eminently practical; he loved philosophy chiefly because of the immense utility which he

felt certain lay infolded in it, for the improving and adorning of man's life. This is the meaning of the well-known Baconian axiom, "Knowledge is power." To know Nature would always involve, he thought, the power to use her for our own purposes; and it seems that he would have cared little for any scientific knowledge of phenomena which remained barren of practical results.

The end, therefore, was to know Nature in order to make use of her; from this end all previous philosophy had wandered away, and lost itself. Let us try now to conceive distinctly what Bacon believed himself to have accomplished for its realization. In few words, he believed that he had discovered an intellectual instrument of such enormous power, that the skilful application of it would suffice to resolve all the problems which the world of sense presents to us. This "new instrument," or "Novum Organum," he describes in the book so named. Armed with this, he considered that an ordinary intellect would be placed on a par with the most highly gifted minds; and this supposed fact he uses to defend himself from the charge of presumption, since, he says, it is not a question of mental gifts or powers, but of methods; and just as a weak man, armed with a lever, may, without presumption, think he can raise a greater weight than a strong man using only his bare strength, so the inquirer into nature, who has found out the right road or method, may, without vanity, expect to make greater discoveries than he, however great his original powers, who is proceeding by the wrong road. The instrument thus extolled is the Baconian "method of instances," of which it may be well here to give a short account.

Let it be premised that the object of the philosopher is to ascertain the *form*, that is, the fundamental law,

of some property common to a variety of natural objects: He must proceed thus: First, he prepares a table of instances, in all of which the property is present; as, for example, — in the case of heat, — the sun's rays, fire, wetted hay, &c. Second, he prepares a table of instances, apparently cognate to those in the first table, or some of them, in which, nevertheless, the given property is absent. Thus the moon's rays, though, like those of the sun, they possess illuminating power, give out no heat. Third, he prepares a table of degrees, or a comparative table, showing the different degrees in which the property is exhibited in different instances. Fourth, by means of the materials accumulated in the three preceding tables, he constructs a table of exclusions, or a "rejection of natures;" that is, he successively denies any property to be the *form* of the given property, which he has not found to be invariably present or absent in every instance where the latter was present or absent, and to increase and decrease as the latter increased and decreased. Thus, in the case of heat, he denies light to be the form of heat, because he has found light to be present in the instance of the moon's rays, while heat was absent. The fifth and final step is, to draw an affirmative conclusion, — the "interpretation of nature in the affirmative," — that is, to affirm that residuary property which, *if the process has been carried far enough*, will be found remaining when all others have been excluded, to be the form of the given property. Thus he affirms motion to be the form of heat.

The weak point in this method, or, at any rate, one weak point, seems to be indicated by the words printed in Italics, "if the process has been carried far enough."

[1] Novum Organum, Book II. chap. xvii.: "The form of heat, or of light, means exactly the same as the law of heat, or the law of light."

There would be no difficulty in doing this, if it were really such an easy matter to break up every instance or concrete phenomenon into the "natures," or abstract properties, entering into its composition, as Bacon assumes it to be. But how far is even modern science, aided by all the resources of chemistry and electricity, from having accomplished this! and how hopeless was it, then, to make this process the foundation of a philosophic method, when chemistry could not as yet be said to exist! It seems that Bacon himself partly fell into that error, to which he rightly ascribes the sterility of philosophy in his day,[1] — the tendency, namely, to frame wide generalizations from insufficient data, and to neglect the laborious establishment of partial or medial generalizations. Thus it is that he is led to attempt to define the inmost nature of heat, when as yet the materials for so wide and difficult a generalization had not been collected — as they can only be collected — by means of a searching investigation into all the laws which regulate its operation and manifestation.

Considerations of this kind, coupled with the now admitted fact, that, fond as Bacon was of experiments, he made and multiplied them to little profit, and left no important contribution to any single branch of physical science, induce the latest editors of his works,[2] whose admirable performance of their task marks them out as in every way competent judges, to acknowledge that nothing can be made of his peculiar system of philosophy. "If we have not tried it, it is because we feel confident that it would not answer. We regard it as a curious piece of machinery, very subtle, elaborate, and ingenious; but not worth constructing, because all the work it could do may be done more easily another way."

[1] Novum Organum, Book II.

[2] Bacon's Works, edited by Ellis and Spedding.

All this may be true: still the claims of Bacon to the admiration and gratitude of his countrymen rest upon grounds which nothing alleged here, or that can be alleged, will ever weaken. He used his life and his genius in preaching perpetually, that men should go to nature, and investigate the facts; that in all matters cognizable by the understanding, with the sole exception of revealed religion, experience, not authority, should be taken as the guide to truth. When he himself, indeed, went to nature, the instrument which he used was too much encumbered with those metaphysical notions, the futility of which it was reserved for a later age to discover, to permit of his effecting much; but his general advice was followed, though his particular method was found unworkable. It may be doubted whether his influence has not been almost too great in this direction: whether he has not led his countrymen too far away from the path of speculation and the consideration of general principles; whether the incessant accumulation of observations and experiments, to which our men of science, as Baconians, have devoted themselves ever since the sixteenth century, has not been too exclusively prosecuted, to the detriment of the departments of pure thought.[1] But, however this may be, the reality and the greatness of his influence can be denied by none who contemplate the immense practical benefits which the prevalence of the inductive spirit, and the resort to experiment, have conferred upon England, and, through England, upon Europe and America.

Again: it must be remembered, that, if any thing was wanting to Bacon in exact scientific faculty, it was more than compensated in moral wisdom. Certainly,

[1] See some valuable remarks on this point, in the chapter on the Scottish intellect in the eighteenth century, in the second volume of the lamented Mr. Buckle's History of Civilization.

when we consider with what a grasp of understanding he took in all the parts of human society; how he surveyed all its ranks and subdivisions, noting the elements of strength and weakness natural to each; and, again, how profoundly he analyzed the false appearances, or "idols," which beset individual minds, and prevent them from attaining to truth, — the idols of the tribe, or false notions common to the race; the idols of the cave, or false notions proper to the individual; the idols of the market-place, or the false notions imposed upon us by the ambiguities of language; lastly, the idols of the theatre, or the specious theories of false philosophy, — when we review these and many other deep and subtle thoughts that lie thickly scattered through his works, it is impossible not to rank Bacon among the most powerful and sagacious thinkers that have ever instructed mankind.

With these general remarks on the Baconian philosophy, we proceed to note down the date of appearance, and general scope, of Lord Bacon's principal works. Of "The Essays" we have already spoken.[1] His philosophical views are contained in three principal works, besides many detached papers and fragments. The three works are, "The Advancement of Learning," the "Instauratio Magna," and the "De Augmentis Scientiarum." The first was composed in English, and first published in 1605. Its general object was to take a survey of the whole field of human knowledge, showing its actual state in its various departments, and noting what parts had been cultivated, what were lying waste, without, however, entering upon the difficult inquiry as to *erroneous methods* of cultivation; his purpose in this work being only "to note omissions and deficiencies," with a view to their being made good by

[1] See p. 122.

the labors of learned men. It may throw light on what has been said as to the nature of Bacon's method, if his mode of procedure in the work now under consideration be examined somewhat more fully.

After dividing human learning into three parts, — history, poetry, and philosophy, corresponding respectively to the three principal faculties of the mind, memory, imagination, and reason, — he first examines how far history and poetry have been adequately cultivated. Literary history is noted as deficient, a remark which Bacon certainly would not have made at the present day. Coming to philosophy, he again makes a threefold division into divine, natural, and human philosophy. By divine philosophy he means natural theology, or "that knowledge or rudiment of knowledge concerning God, which may be obtained by the contemplation of his creatures; which knowledge may be truly termed divine in respect of the object, and natural in respect of the light."

Natural philosophy he divides into two parts, — the inquisition of causes, and the production of effects; speculative and operative; natural science and natural prudence. Now, the reader, unacquainted with the precise light in which Bacon regarded his own method, would expect to find him noting down natural science as extremely deficient, and giving some sketch, by way of anticipation, of the improvements which he hoped to introduce into its cultivation. But he does nothing of the kind, and for this reason: because the method from which he expected so much did not appear to him in the light of an improvement on old modes of inquiry, but rather as a piece of new intellectual machinery, by him first invented. He does not, therefore, refer it to the philosophy of nature, but, as we shall see, to the philosophy of the human mind. Human philosophy he

divides into two parts, — knowledge of man as an individual, and knowledge of man in society, or civil knowledge. Again: the knowledge of man as an individual is of two kinds, as relating either to the body or to the mind. To the first kind are referred human anatomy, medicine, &c.; the second kind includes knowledge of the substance or nature of the mind, and knowledge of its faculties or functions. And since these faculties are mainly of two kinds, those of the understanding and reason, and those of the will, appetite, and affection, this part of human philosophy naturally falls into the two great leading divisions, rational and moral. What is said of the state of moral or ethical philosophy is exceedingly interesting; but it is with his account of "rational knowledge, or arts intellectual," that we have here to do. The first of these, he says, is the "art of inquiry or invention," which, in that department of it which deals with arts and sciences, he notes as deficient, and proceeds, in a very striking passage,[1] to explain the grounds of this opinion. Rejecting the syllogistic method as inadequate, he pronounces in favor of the inductive method, as the true art of intellectual invention, — the sole genuine interpreter of nature, — and promises to expound it on a subsequent occasion. This promise he redeemed, partially at least, by the publication of the "Novum Organum," in 1620. This is the second part of what he intended to be a vast philosophical system, six divisions, entitled the "Instauratio Philosophiæ." The "De Augmentis Scientiarum," which is in the main a Latin version of "The Advancement of Learning," about one-third of its bulk consisting of new matter, covers most of the ground which the first of these divisions was intended to occupy; the second is the "Novum Organum." The third division was to consist

[1] Vol. iii. p. 392 (Ellis's edition).

of a complete "Historia Naturalis," founded on the most accurate observation, and the most diligent and extensive research. To this part Bacon only contributed what he called his "Centuries of Natural History," containing about one thousand observed facts and experiments; at the same time he enumerated one hundred and thirty particular histories which ought to be prepared under this head. The "Scala Intellectus," or history of analytical investigation, was to form the fourth division. By this appears to have been meant a description of the actual processes employed by the intellect in the investigation of truth, with an account of the peculiar difficulties and peculiar facilities which it encounters on the road. Of this part Bacon has only written a few introductory pages. The fifth division was to have contained samples of the new method of philosophizing, and specimens of the results obtained, under the title, "Prodromi sive Anticipationes Philosophiæ Secundæ." Two or three separate tracts under this head are all that Bacon could accomplish. The sixth division, "Philosophia Secunda sive Scientia activa," which should have been the full system, properly digested and harmoniously ordered, of the new philosophy itself, he despaired of living to accomplish. Indeed, to use Mr. Hallam's words, "no one man could have filled up the vast outline, which he alone, in that stage of the world, could have so boldly sketched."

Political Science; Buchanan, Spenser, Raleigh.

It was impossible but that the general intellectual awakening which characterized the period should extend itself to political science. The doctrines of civil freedom now began to be heard from many lips, and in every direction penetrated the minds of men, producing convictions which the next generation was to

see brought into action. Not that these opinions were wholly new, even the most advanced of them. To say nothing of the ancients, the great Aquinas, in his treatise "De Regimine Principum," had said, as far back as the middle of the thirteenth century, that "Rex datur propter regnum, et non regnum propter regem,"[1] and had declared the constitutional or limited form of monarchy to be superior to the absolute form. But the class to which literature appealed in the thirteenth century was both too small, and too much absorbed in professional interests, to admit of such views becoming fruitful. After the invention of printing, and the revival of learning, they were taken up by many thinkers in different parts of Europe, and rapidly circulated through the educated portion of society. In 1579 the stern old George Buchanan, James I.'s pedagogue, crowned a long and adventurous life in which his liberal opinions had brought on him more than one imprisonment, besides innumerable minor persecutions and troubles, by the publication, in his seventy-fourth year, of the work, "De Jure Regni apud Scotos."[2] This treatise, which is in Latin, is in the form of a dialogue between the author and Thomas Maitland, upon the origin and nature of royal authority in general, and of the authority of the Scottish crown in particular. In either case, he derives the authority, so far as lawful, entirely from the consent of the governed; and argues that its abuse — inasmuch as its possessor is thereby constituted a tyrant — exposes him justly even to capital punishment at the hands of his people, and that not by public sentence only, but by the act of any private person. Views so extreme led

[1] "The king exists for the sake of the kingdom, not the kingdom for the sake of the king."

[2] "Upon Scotch Monarchical Law."

to the condemnation and prohibition of the work by the Scottish parliament in 1584. It may be granted that Buchanan's close connection with the party of the regent Murray, whose interest it was to create an opinion of the lawfulness of any proceedings, to whatever lengths they might be carried, against the person and authority of the unhappy queen, then in confinement in England, was likely to impart an extraordinary keenness and stringency to the anti-monarchical theories supported in the book. Nevertheless similar views were supported in the sixteenth century, in the most unexpected quarters. The Jesuit Mariana, for instance, openly advocates regicide in certain contingencies; and it was quite in character with the daring temper of the age to demolish the awe surrounding any power, however venerable, which thwarted the projects of either the majority or the most active and influential party in a state.

Among the political writings of this period there is none more remarkable than Spenser's "View of the State of Ireland," which, though written and presented to Elizabeth about the year 1596, was not published till 1633. This is the work of an eye-witness, who was at once a shrewd observer and a profound thinker, upon the difficulties of the Irish question, — that problem which pressed for solution in the sixteenth century, and is still unsolved in the nineteenth. Spenser traces the evils afflicting Ireland to three sources, connected respectively with its laws, its customs, and its religion; examines each source in turn; suggests specific remedial measures, and finally sketches out a general plan of government calculated to prevent the growth of similar mischiefs for the future.

In England, the active and penetrating mind of Raleigh was employed in this direction among others.

It is very interesting to find him, in his "Observations on Trade and Commerce," advocating the system of low duties on imports, and explaining the immense advantages which the Dutch, in the few years that had elapsed since they conquered their independence from Spain, had derived from free trade and open ports. The treatise on "The Prerogative of Parliament," written in the Tower, and addressed to the king, was designed to induce James to summon a parliament as the most certain and satisfactory mode of paying the crown debts. It is true, he adapts the reasoning in some places to the base and tyrannical mind which he was attempting to influence; saying, for example, that, although the king might be obliged to promise reforms to his parliament in return for subsidies, he need not keep his word when parliament was broken up. But this Machiavelian suggestion may be explained as the desperate expedient of an unhappy prisoner, who saw no hope either for himself or for his country except in the justice of a free parliament, and, since the king alone could call parliament together, endeavored to make the measure as little unpalatable as possible to the contemptible and unprincipled person who then occupied the throne. Much of the historical inquiry which he institutes into the relations between former parliaments and English kings is extremely acute and valuable. In "The Maxims of State," a short treatise, not written, like the one last mentioned, to serve an immediate purpose, Raleigh's naturally honest and noble nature asserts itself. In this, he explicitly rejects all the immoral suggestions of Machiavel, and lays down none but sound and enlightened principles for the conduct of governments. Thus, among the maxims to be observed by an hereditary sovereign, we read the following: —

"15. To observe the laws of his country, and not to encounter them with his prerogative, nor to use it at all where there is a law, for that it maketh a secret and just grudge in the people's hearts, especially if it tend to take from them their commodities, and to bestow them upon other of his courtiers and ministers."

It would have been well for Charles I., if he had laid this maxim to heart before attempting to levy ship-money. Again: —

"17. To be moderate in his taxes and impositions; and, when need doth require to use the subjects' purse, to do it by parliament, and with their consents, making the cause apparent to them, and showing his unwillingness in charging them; finally, so to use it that it may seem rather an offer from his subjects than an exaction by him."

A political essay, entitled "The Cabinet Council," was left by Raleigh in manuscript at his death, and came into the hands of Milton, by whom it was published with a short preface. Though acute and shrewd, like all that came from the same hand, this treatise is less interesting than those already mentioned, because it enters little into the consideration of general causes, but consists mainly of practical maxims, suited to that age, for the use of statesmen and commanders.

A political treatise, which was overlooked in its proper place, may be noticed here. This is the "Governour" of Sir Thomas Elyot, a courtier in the time of Henry VIII. The book is dedicated to the king, and was first published in 1531. Experience, and reading of the ancients, he tells us, have qualified him, and inclination incited him, to write of "the form of a juste publike weale." Such an opening makes us think of Plato's "Republic," or More's "Utopia;" or, at the least, Fortescue's "Absolute and Limited Monarchy." But the promise was not kept, nor could it well have been kept; for who that had any regard for his life, and was not hopelessly servile in nature, could have written freely and fully on political questions under the horrible despotism of Henry VIII.? After the first few pages, the author slides into the subject of education for the remainder of the first book; the second and third books, again with the exception of a few pages, form an ethical treatise on virtues and vices, with but slight reference to the bearing of these on the work of govern-

ment. In the brief portion which is political, Elyot argues on behalf of ranks and degrees among men from the examples of subordination afforded in the kingdoms of nature. Superior knowledge he deems to be, in itself, the best and most legitimate title to superior honor. Monarchy, as a form of government, he sets above aristocracy and democracy. He draws an argument from a beehive: —

"In a little beaste, whiche of all other is most to be mervailed at, I mean the Bee, is lefte to man by nature a perpetual figure of a just governaunce or rule; who have among them one principall bee for their governour, which excelleth all other in greatnesse, yet hath he no pricke or stinge, but in him is more knowledge than in the residewe."

CHAPTER V.

CIVIL WAR PERIOD.

1625–1700.

THE literature of this period will be better understood after a brief explanation has been given of the political changes which attended the fall, restoration, and ultimate expulsion of the Stuart dynasty.

The Puritan party, whose proceedings and opinions in the two preceding reigns have been already noticed, continued to grow in importance, and demanded with increasing loudness a reform in the Church establishment. They were met at first by a bigotry at least equal, and a power superior, to their own. Archbishop Laud, who presided in the High Commission Court,[1] had taken for his motto the word "thorough," and had persuaded himself that only by a system of severity could conformity to the established religion be enforced. Those who wrote against, or even impugned in conversation, the doctrine, discipline, or government of the Church of England, were brought before the High Commission Court, and heavily fined; and a repetition of the offence, particularly if any expressions were used out of which a seditious meaning could be extracted, frequently led to an indictment of the offender in the Star Chamber (in which, also, Laud had a seat), and to his imprisonment and mutilation by order of

[1] Established by Queen Elizabeth, to try ecclesiastical offences.

that iniquitous tribunal. Thus Prynne, a lawyer, Bastwick, a physician, and Burton, a clergyman, after having run the gauntlet of the High Commission Court, and been there sentenced to suspension from the practice of their professions, fined, imprisoned, and excommunicated, were, in 1632, summoned before the Star Chamber, and sentenced to stand in the pillory, to lose their ears, and be imprisoned for life. In 1633 Leighton, father of the eminent Archbishop Leighton, was, by the same court, sentenced to be publicly whipped, to lose both ears, to have his nostrils slit, to be branded on both cheeks, and imprisoned for life. In all these cases the offence was of the same kind; the publication of some book or tract, generally couched, it must be admitted, in scurrilous and inflammatory language, assailing the government of the Church by bishops, or the Church liturgy and ceremonies, or some of the common popular amusements, such as dancing and play-going, to which these fanatics imputed most of the vice which corrupted society.

To these ecclesiastical grievances, Charles I. took care to add political. By his levies of ship-money and of tonnage and poundage, by his stretches of the prerogative, by his long delay in convoking the parliament, and many other illegal or irritating proceedings, he estranged most of the leading politicians, — the Pyms, Hampdens, Seldens, and Hydes, — just as by supporting Laud he estranged the commercial and burgher classes, among whom Puritanism had its stronghold. In November, 1640, the famous Long Parliament met. The quarrel became too envenomed to be composed otherwise than by recourse to arms; and in 1642 the civil war broke out. In the following year, London being completely in the power of the parliament, the Puritans were able to gratify their old grudge against

the play-writers by closing all the theatres. Gradually the conduct of the war passed out of the hands of the more numerous section of the Puritan party, the Presbyterians, into those of a section hitherto obscure, — the Independents, who were supported by the genius of Milton and Cromwell. This sect originally bore the name of "Brownists," from their founder, Robert Browne (1549–1630). They went beyond the moderate Puritans in regarding conformity to the Establishment as a sin, and therefore forming, in defiance of the law, separate congregations; but their later writers, such as Milton and Owen, compensated for this indomitable sectarianism by maintaining the doctrine of toleration. Against the Presbyterians they argued that the civil magistrate had no right to force the consciences of individuals. They took care, indeed, to make one exception: there was to be no toleration for the Roman Catholic worship. "As for what you mention about liberty of conscience," said Cromwell to the delegates from Ross, "I meddle not with any man's conscience. But, if by liberty of conscience you mean a liberty to exercise the mass, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and to let you know, where the parliament of England have power, that will not be permitted."[1] Still it was a great thing to have the principle once boldly asserted and partially applied; for Roman Catholics, as well as others, were sure to benefit, sooner or later, from its extension.

In the civil war, the clergy, four-fifths of the aristocracy and landed gentry, with the rural population depending on them, and some few cities, adhered to the king. The poets, wits, and artists, between whom and Puritanism a kind of natural enmity subsisted, sought, with few exceptions, the royal camp, where

[1] See Carlyle's "Letters and Speeches of Cromwell."

they were probably more noisy than serviceable. On the other hand, the parliament was supported by the great middle class, and by the yeomen or small landed proprietors. It had at first but one poet (Wither was then a royalist), but that one was John Milton.

The king's cause became hopeless after the defeat of Naseby in 1645; and after a lengthened imprisonment he was brought to the block by the army and the Independents, ostensibly as a traitor and malefactor against his people; really, because, while he lived, the revolutionary leaders could never feel secure. There is a significant query in one of Cromwell's letters, written in 1648, "whether 'Salus populi summa lex' be not a sound maxim."

But before the fatal window in Whitehall the reaction in the public sentiment and conscience commenced. Cromwell, indeed, carried on the government with consummate ability and vigor; but, after all, he represented only his own stern genius, and the victorious army which he had created; and when he died, and in the rivalries of his generals the power of that army was neutralized, England, by a kind of irresistible gravitation, returned to that position of defined and prescriptive freedom which had been elaborated during the long course of the middle ages.

At the Restoration (1660), the courtiers, wits, and poets returned from exile not uninfluenced, whether for good or evil, by their long sojourn abroad; the Anglican clergy saw their Church established on a firmer footing than ever; and their Puritan adversaries, ejected and silenced, passed below the surface of society, and secretly organized the earlier varieties of that many-headed British dissent which now numbers nearly half the people of England among its adherents. The theatres were re-opened; and every loyal subject.

to prove himself no Puritan, tried to be as wild, reckless, and dissolute as possible. Yet in the course of years the defeated party, with changed tactics indeed, and in a soberer mood, began to make itself felt. Instead of asking for a theocracy, they now agitated for toleration; and, renouncing their republicanism as impracticable, they took up the watchword of constitutional reform. The Puritans and Roundheads of the civil war re-appear towards the close of Charles II.'s reign, under the more permanent appellation of the *Whig party*.

One of the points in which the party was found least altered after its transformation was its bitter and traditional hostility to the Church of Rome. Hence, after it became known that the heir-presumptive to the crown, James, Duke of York, had become a Roman Catholic, the Whigs formed the design of excluding him on that ground from the throne, and placing the crown upon the head of the next Protestant heir. The party of the court and the Cavaliers (who began about this time to be called Tories) vigorously opposed the scheme, and with success. James II. succeeded in 1685, and immediately began to take measures for the relief of Catholics from the many disabilites under which they labored. But he pursued his object with all the indiscretion and unfairness habitual to his family. Though the Whigs had been defeated and cowed, though the great majority of the nation desired to be loyal, though the Anglican clergy in particular had committed themselves irrevocably to the position that a king ought to be obeyed, no matter to what lengths he might go in tyranny, — he so managed matters as almost to compel the divines to eat their own words, and, by forfeiting the affection and confidence of the people, to throw the game into the hands of the Whigs. The

Revolution came; James II. was expelled; the Act of Settlement was passed; and the Roman Catholics of England again became an obscure and persecuted minority, which for a hundred years almost disappears from the public gaze and from the page of history.

Under William III., from 1688 to 1700, there was a lull, comparatively speaking, in political affairs. The Toleration Act, passed in 1689, amounted to a formal renunciation of the claim of the State — on account of which so much blood had been shed in this and the previous century — to impose religious uniformity upon its subjects. Towards the middle of William's reign the Tories began to recover from the stunning effects of the moral shock which they had sustained at the Revolution; and the modern system of parliamentary government, though complicated for a time by the question of Jacobitism, began to develop its outlines out of the strife of the opposing parties.

Having thus reviewed the course of events, we proceed to describe the development of ideas, as expressed in literature, during the same period.

Poetry: Jonson; The Fantastic School; Cowley, Crashaw, &c.; Milton, Dryden, Butler.

Under the Stuarts the court still, as in the days of Elizabeth, opened its gates gladly to the poets and playwrights. Jonson's chief literary employment during his later years was the composition of masques for the entertainment of the king and royal family. That quarrelsome, reckless, intemperate man, whose pedantry must have been insufferable to his contemporaries, had it not been relieved by such flashes of wit, such a flow of graceful, simple feeling, outlived by many years the friends of his youth, and died, almost an old man, in 1637. His beautiful pastoral drama of "The

Sad Shepherd" was left unfinished at his death. To a collection of his miscellaneous poems he gave the strange title of "Underwoods." No. XV. is the famous epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke: —

"Underneath this sable herse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Learned, and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee."

A diligent reader of Jonson's masques will find, scattered up and down them, some of the airiest and prettiest songs in the world. "Rise, Cynthia, rise," is one of these; another is the merry catch in "The Masque of Oberon," beginning, —

"Buz, quoth the blue flie,
Hum, quoth the bee;
Buz and hum they cry,
And so do we."

Among the numerous epigrams, this is noteworthy: —

"Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die;
Which in life did harbor give
To more virtue than doth live."

The younger race of poets belonged nearly all to what has been termed by Dryden and Dr. Johnson the metaphysical school, the founder of which in England was Donne. But, in fact, this style of writing was of Italian parentage, and was brought in by the Neapolitan Marini.[1] Tired of the endless imitations of the ancients, which, except when a great genius like that of Tasso broke through all conventional rules, had ever

[1] Born 1569, died 1625; author of the Adone and the Sospetto di Herode.

since the revival of learning fettered the poetic taste of Italy, Marini resolved to launch out boldly in a new career of invention, and to give to the world whatever his keen wit and lively fancy might prompt to him. He is described by Sismondi[1] as "the celebrated innovator on classic Italian taste, who first seduced the poets of the seventeenth century into that labored and affected style which his own richness and vivacity of imagination were so well calculated to recommend. The most whimsical comparisons, pompous and overwrought descriptions, with a species of poetical punning and research, were soon esteemed, under his authority, as beauties of the very first order." Marini resided for some years in France; and it was in that country that he produced his "Adone." His influence upon French poetry was as great as upon Italian; but the vigor and freedom which it communicated were perhaps more than counterbalanced by the glaring bad taste which it encouraged. The same may be said of his influence upon our own poets. Milton alone had too much originality and inherent force to be carried away in the stream; but the most popular poets of the day — Donne, Cowley, Crashaw, Waller, Cleveland, and even Dryden in his earlier efforts — gave in to the prevailing fashion; and, instead of simple, natural images, studded their poems with *conceits* (*concetti*). This explains why Cowley was rated by his contemporaries as the greatest poet of his day, since every age has its favorite fashions in literature as in costume; and those who conform to them receive more praise than those who assert their independence. Thus Clarendon[2] speaks of Cowley as having "made a flight beyond all men;" and Denham, in the elegy which he wrote on him, com-

[1] Literature of the South of Europe (Roscoe), vol. ii. p. 262.

[2] Autobiography, vol. i. p. 30.

pares him with Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, to the disadvantage of the three older poets. A few specimens will, however, better illustrate the metaphysical, or, as we should prefer to term it, the fantastic school, than pages of explanation. The first is from Donne's metrical epistles: describing a sea-voyage, he says, —

> "There note they the ship's sicknesses, — the mast
> Shaked with an ague, and the hold and waist
> With a salt dropsy clogged."

Cleveland compares the stopping of a fountain to a change in the devolution of an estate: —

> "As an obstructed fountain's head
> Cuts the entail off from the streams,
> And brooks are disinherited;
> Honor and beauty are mere dreams,
> Since Charles and Mary lost their beams."

Cowley talks of a trembling sky and a startled sun. In the "Davideis" Envy thus addresses Lucifer: —

> "Do thou but threat, loud storms shall make reply,
> And thunder echo to the *trembling* sky;
> Whilst raging seas swell to so bold a height,
> As shall the fire's proud element affright.
> The old drudging sun, from his long-beaten way,
> Shall at thy voice *start*, and misguide the day," &c.

Dryden, in his youthful elegy on Lord Hastings, who died of the small-pox, describes that malady under various figures: —

> "Blisters with pride swelled, which through's flesh did sprout
> Like rose-buds, stuck in the lily-skin about.
> Each little pimple had a tear in it,
> To wail the fault its rising did commit."

To such a pitch of extravagance did talented men proceed in their endeavor to write in the fashion, in their straining after the much-admired *conceits!*

Of Donne, who died in 1631, we have already spoken.[1] The other poets just mentioned of the fantastic school, namely, Cowley, Crashaw, Waller, and Cleveland, together with Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, George Herbert, Sir John Denham, and Francis Quarles, were all ardent royalists. Cowley, like Horace driven from Athens, —

"Dura sed emovere loco me tempora grato,"

was dislodged from both universities, in turn, by the victorious arms of the parliament, and, attaching himself to the suite of Henrietta Maria, was employed by her at Paris for many years as a confidential secretary. After his return to England in 1656, he published his entire poems, consisting of "Miscellanies," "Anacreontics,"[2] "Pindaric Odes," "The Mistress," and the "Davideis." In the preface he advised peaceful submission to the existing government; and this tenderness to "the usurpation" was maliciously remembered against him after the restoration of monarchy. He was fully included in the act of oblivion which Charles II. is said to have extended to his *friends*. His last years were spent in retirement at Chertsey. He died in 1667, from the effects of a cold caught by staying too long among his laborers in the hay-field.

It will be more easy to assign his proper rank to Cowley, if one remembers that he had a remarkably quick and apprehensive understanding, but a feeble character. One reads a few of his minor pieces, and is struck by the penetrating power of his wit, and dazzled by the daring flights of his imagination; one conceives such a man to be capable of the greatest things. Yet it is not so; a native weakness prevents him from soaring with a sustained flight: the hue of his resolution is

[1] See p. 90. [2] See p. 444.

ever "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;" or, rather, his resolution is not of that tried and stable quality at the outset which would enable it to brush away subsequent and conflicting impulses from its path. He began the "Davideis" at Cambridge, with the idea of producing a great epic poem on a scriptural subject; but he completed no more than four cantos, and then gave up the design. It needed a more stern determination than his to carry through such a work to a successful determination. He felt this, nor doubted that the right poet would be found. He says of the "Davideis," "I shall be ambitious of no other fruit for this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully." As in this preface (written in 1656) he was endeavoring to conciliate the party in power, it seems not unlikely that in this passage he actually refers to Milton, who in more than one of his prose works had spoken of his wish and intention to take up the harp some day, and sing to the Divine honor "an elaborate song for generations."

There was something in Cowley of extraordinary power, both to kindle affection and to disarm malice. Never was any man more truly loved by his friends; and this personal charm may explain in part their excessive admiration of his genius. But he, if left to himself, preferred solitude; professing always, says his biographer, Sprat, "that he went out of the world, as it was man's, into the same world, as it was nature's, and as it was God's." He once wrote,—

> "All wretched and too solitary he
> Who loves not his own company.
> He'll feel the weight of 't many a day,
> Unless he call in sin or vanity
> To help to bear't away."

In truth, a mind so active and penetrating as his could never allow time to hang heavy, or be unemployed. When, for example, upon his return to England during the Protectorate, his friends advised him to study medicine, his compliance with their advice, instead of leading him to a profitable practice, carried him no farther than the pharmacopœia; the subject of *herbs* so fascinated him, that he wandered on from the consideration of their general properties, and thence to the study of their modes and conditions of growth. From *herbs* he passed on to *flowers;* which in turn suggested the study of *trees*, first those of the orchard, next those of the forest. The result was a Latin poem in six books, "Of Plants," — a work of wonderful cleverness and brilliancy. Several hands gladly engaged in translating it into English.

This remarkable fertility and brilliancy of wit is perhaps still better shown by another work, a Latin play, "Naufragium Joculare" (The Comic Shipwreck), which he wrote and caused to be acted at Cambridge, in his twentieth year. It is in the style of Terence; and the dialogue proceeds with an easy flow of jest, anecdote, and repartee, which exhibits Cowley's linguistic resources in a most remarkable light. His only other dramatic attempts were, "Love's Riddle," — a pastoral comedy which he composed while still a Westminster boy, and "The Cutter of Coleman Street," — a prose comedy of no great merit.

His shorter poems have now to be considered; and it is among these that we shall find what may approach nearest to a justification of the praises of his contemporaries. As to "The Mistress," — a collection of love-poems, — Cowley, if his own account may be believed, wrote them, not in the character of a lover impelled to clothe his feelings and wishes in song, but rather in

that of a professional verse-maker; for poets, he says, "are never thought freemen of their company, without paying some duties, and obliging themselves to be true to love." These poems accordingly may be taken for metrical exercises, displaying much ingenuity, but no living power. One, however, which is very gracefully and happily expressed, and more carefully rhymed and measured than is the author's wont, shall be given at a future page.[1] But it was the daring flight which he essayed in his Pindaric odes that most dazzled and charmed the age. This style, which Dryden often tried, and Pope and Gray occasionally, was, he tells us, accidentally suggested to him; the works of Pindar having chanced to fall in his way at a time when no other books were to be had, and the compulsory familiarity thus occasioned having led to a deliberate preference for Pindar's irregular metres. But, even if this was the correct account of it, it is certain that the permitted lawlessness of the metre, in which long and short lines are mingled together hap-hazard, and rhymes are either coupled, alternate, or even more widely separated, was peculiarly suitable to the vehement rush of thoughts which was ever pressing for utterance through Cowley's brain, and which no adequate solidity of judgment controlled or sifted. But Cowley is not even regular in dealing with irregularity. While many of his "Pindariques" preserve a wild harmony of their own amidst all their flings and sallies, which is enough to satisfy the critical ear, there are others in which lines occur that trail their huge length laboriously along like wounded snakes, and by no possible humoring or contraction of the syllables, can be reduced to harmony. Take, for instance, the conclusion of the ode to Mr. Hobbes, a really fine poem: what mortal ear can tolerate the last line? —

[1] See p. 441.

"And that which never is to die, forever must be young."

Dryden's correcter ear, when he Pindaricised, scarcely ever suffered him to make such slips.

The subjects of Cowley's Pindaric odes are very various. Sometimes he translates or imitates Pindar or Horace; sometimes he devotes them to the cause of philosophy, dedicating one to Hobbes, another to the Royal Society then recently founded, another to Harvey on his discovery of the circulation of the blood. The ode "To the Duke of Buckingham," on his marriage with the daughter of Lord Fairfax, possesses some peculiar interest, as bringing before us, in the day of his happy and brilliant youth, the same Villiers whom Dryden satirized under the character of Zimri, and whose end afforded a theme for Pope to moralize upon in his third "Epistle." He discharged his loyal duty to his prince in the ode "Upon his Majesty's Restoration and Return." Among all similar compositions of that age, Cowley's Restoration ode is by far the best, because the most genuine. It is true that his loyalty makes him depart from truth, when Charles II., or his father, or any other Stuart, is in the case, almost as much as Dryden. But such exaggeration is more excusable in the older poet, who had suffered long years for the cause which he now saw triumphant, and whose loyal logic seems to have almost honestly reasoned thus: "Being the rightful king, he *must* be all that is excellent." With even greater sincerity, one cannot doubt, Cowley abhorred the Protector, with whom he had never, like Dryden, or Waller, or Milton, been brought into close contact. In a prose "Discourse concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell," he burst forth into a set of vigorous stanzas, pathetically deprecating the recurrence of such a horrible tyranny as the nation had just been freed from, —

"Come the eleventh plague, rather than this should be;
Come sink us rather in the sea;
Come rather pestilence, and reap us down;
Come God's sword, rather than our own;
Let rather Roman come again,
Or Saxon, Norman, or the Dane,
In all the ills we ever bore,
We grieved, we sighed, we wept: we never blushed before.

If for our sins the divine vengeance be
Called to the last extremity,
Let some denouncing Jonas first be sent,
To see if England will repent:
Methinks at least some prodigy,
Some dreadful portent from on high,
Should terribly forewarn the earth,
As of good princes' deaths, so of a tyrant's birth."

We shall have occasion to notice, farther on, the very different impressions which this great ruler and his policy left on Dryden and Milton.[1] One, and that one perhaps the best of the "Pindariques," is called "The Complaint;" in the language of decent, but firm and not undignified remonstrance, it speaks of the neglect in which the gentle poet lay, after his long and faithful service to the court.

As a prose writer, Cowley is copious and easy, with much the same faults that we shall have to notice in Dryden.

If, after this examination of his writings, the reader should still ask wherein lies the secret of the extraordinary admiration with which Cowley was regarded by his contemporaries, I can only say, that, so far as I can discover, the feeling which his writings excited of difficulties overcome, and various learning employed in the work of composition, was the chief incentive to that admiration. Poetry was then looked upon as a kind of art or craft, in which no one could or ought to excel,

[1] See pp. 179, 184.

who had not been regularly instructed in all the technical details, and through a classical education had become familiar at first hand with the great poets of antiquity. All these requirements were fulfilled in Cowley, and they were undeniably united to brilliant talents; so that, according to all the prevailing notions of the time, he could not fail to be considered a great poet. Thus it happened that Shakspeare, who was thought to have written *easily*, employing little labor and no learning, was ranked, even by able men, below Ben Jonson; a judgment to our present ideas wholly incomprehensible. Cleveland, for instance, writes as follows, in an ode to Ben Jonson: —

> "Shakspeare may make griefs, merry Beaumont's style
> Ravish and melt anger into a smile;
> In winter nights, or after meals, they be,
> I must confess, very good company.
> But thou exact'st our best hours' industry;
> We may read them: we ought to study thee;
> Thy scenes are precepts; every verse doth give
> Counsel, and teach us not to laugh, but live."

The truth is, that the whole doctrine of hero-worship, as we now conceive it, is modern. Whether they would have avowed it, or not, the real upshot of the criticisms on poetry passed by most thinking men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, amounted to a reversal of the old maxim, "Poeta nascitur, non fit:" they assume, on the contrary, that "Poeta fit, non nascitur." The mysterious spontaneity of genius, which constitutes the ineffable charm of the masterpieces of all great artists, which links together in one fraternity Mozart and Raphael and Shakspeare, was considered by critics of this class rather as a disqualification than otherwise; they associated and confounded ease of composition with shallowness of endowment, and a stock of classical phraseology with creative power.

The lyrics of Edmund Waller can never die. When he tried the heroic style, some inherent disqualification for the task — perhaps a want of true inborn dignity — caused him frequently to sink *per saltum* from the sublime to the ridiculous. What more perfect instance of the bathos could be given than the following lines from his elaborate elegy "Upon the Death of the Lord Protector"? —

> "Our bounds' enlargement was his latest toil,
> Nor hath he left us prisoners to our isle:
> Under the tropics is our language spoke,
> *And part of Flanders hath received our yoke.*"

His heroics "To the Queen" are stiff and artificial, while those "To the Queen Mother of France" unpleasantly remind one of the "Loyal Effusions" of Fitzgerald, so amusingly parodied in the "Rejected Addresses." But now turn to the lyrics; and though it cannot be alleged that their taste is always perfect, their diction always faultless, yet we are forced to confess that the author "cum magnis vixisse," and has not fallen below his opportunities. He treads on sure ground while using to cultivated men or polished gifted women the language of graceful, airy compliment; nor are times lacking when a vein of deeper feeling is touched in that ordinarily frivolous heart, and he surprises us by strains pensive, musical, and lingering in the memory like a requiem by Mozart. The song "To Flavia," beginning, —

> "'Tis not your beauty can ingage
> My wary heart;"

the well-known lyric, "Go, Lovely Rose," the song "To Chloris," and that "To a very Young Lady," are all in their several ways exceedingly charming. The fine lines "Upon Ben Jonson" are so appropriate to Shak-

speare, and so *in*appropriate to Jonson, that one could almost believe the heading to be a blunder. The genius of Jonson was, we are told, —

> "Nor this, nor that, but all we find
> And all we can imagine in mankind."

Towards the close of his long life, the muse of Waller approached with trembling the mysteries of death and personal accountability. He was past eighty when he wrote these noble lines: —

> "When we for age could neither read nor write,
> The subject made us able to indite:
> The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;
> So calm are we when passions are no more;
> For then we know how vain it was to boast
> Of fleeting things, too certain to be lost.
> Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
> Conceal that emptiness which age descries.
>
> The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time hath made;
> Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
> As they draw near to their eternal home.
> Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
> Who stand upon the threshold of the new."

Waller lived into the reign of James II., dying in the year 1687.

Richard Crashaw was, like Cowley, ejected from the University of Cambridge by the Puritans, and deprived of his fellowship. He became a Roman Catholic, and, after suffering great hardships from poverty in Paris, was discovered and generously aided by his friend Cowley. He died at Loretto in 1650, and was mourned by Cowley in one of the most moving and beautiful elegies ever written. Besides writing many miscellaneous pieces, he translated the "Sospetto di Herode" of Marini. The unequal texture of his poetry, and his

predilection for conceits, have in his case also greatly dimmed a poetical reputation, which force of thought and depth of feeling might otherwise have rendered a very high one.

Some of the songs of this period seem to be destined to, and may be held to deserve, as enduring a fame as those of Béranger. Such are, besides those by Waller already mentioned, Carew's "He that loves a Rosy Cheek," Lovelace's song "To Althea, from Prison," Wither's "Shall I, wasting in Despair," and many more. Never before or since has English life so blossomed into song. Scotland has since had her Burns, and Ireland her Moore; but, to find the English *chanson* in perfection, we must go back to the seventeenth century.

George Herbert, the brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, is the author of religious poetry, conceived in a vein which reminds one of Southwell, only that it has less warmth and color, and more depth and force. That he was influenced by the older poet, is evident from a sonnet, composed in his seventeenth year, in which he rails, exactly in the manner of Southwell, against the abuse by which poetry is enslaved to human instead of divine love. A collection of his poems, entitled "The Temple," was published in 1635, two years after his death; and a new series, "A Priest to the Temple," appeared among his Remains in 1652. "The Church Porch," the introductory poem of the first series, is highly characteristic. The style is sententious, antithetical, often quaint, and a little verbose; but for didactic pithiness it cannot easily be matched. Take such lines, for instance, as this, in relation to drunkenness and careless companions: —

> "Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin;"

Or this, in relation to veracity: —

"Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie.
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby;"

Or, with reference to the common neglect of education, —

"Some till their ground, but let weeds choke their son;"

or, —

"Envy not greatness; for thou mak'st thereby
Thyself the less, and so the distance greater."

The collection is closed by "The Church Militant," a long poem enunciating the singular theory (which was afterwards applied by Berkeley to "the course of empire"), that religion always has and always will travel westward. On account of the lines, —

"Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand," —

the vice-chancellor at Cambridge refused for some time to license the printing of the work.

Sir Henry Wotton and Bishop Corbet both died before the breaking-out of the civil war. Wotton's serious thoughts were given to diplomacy, but he wrote two or three pretty things. His "Farewell to the Vanities of the World" breathes the detachment of a hermit, and the idealism of a Platonist; yet he took orders late in life to qualify himself for the comfortable post of Provost of Eton. Corbet was a convivial sinner, with plenty of good common-sense; disposed to be lenient to the Puritans, not on principle, but merely from his hearty, bluff English good-nature, which would not let him bear hardly on the weak. His poetry, like the man himself, is of a coarse fibre. His "Journey into France," written in what may be called the "Sir Thopas"[1] metre, is sorry doggerel. In his "Farewell

[1] From the Rime of Sir Topas in the Canterbury Tales.

to the Fairies," this jovial soul, thirsting for pleasure, sighs for the good old mediæval days of dancing, May-poles, lewdness, and all sorts of riotous fun, which the fairies were supposed to patronize.

Thomas Carew, who had a post in the court of Charles I., was cut off in his prime about the year 1639. His poems, which are mostly amatory, are of a level standard of merit; none rise very high, and none are altogether bad.[1] He is full of similitudes and conceits; but they are less extravagant than those of Donne or Crashaw. He Platonizes very prettily in the song, —

"Ask me no more where Jove bestows."

The rose-form which, the philosophers would say, exists, apart from actuality, in the eternal archetype, the one primal form which is the cause of all forms, reposes, according to the philosophy of the lover, in the fathomless deep of his lady's mystic and heavenly beauty.

William Drummond of Hawthornden, an ardent royalist, is the author of miscellaneous poems and sonnets, all bearing the impress of the great Elizabethan age, alike in their fulness of meaning and in their elaborateness and want of simplicity.

John Cleveland was a violent, boisterous royalist, the Wildrake of real life and literary history. Had his fire and force been supported by a keener and more cultivated intellect, he might have been a great poet. He is best known for his tirades against the Scotch, whom he hated both as Presbyterians and as traitors. The old joke against the Scotch, on account of their attachment to their native land appearing to increase in

[1] See p. 440.

the ratio of their distance from it, was cleverly expressed by Cleveland in "The Rebell Scot:" —

> "Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom;
> Not forced him wander, but confined him home."

His attachment to Episcopacy may be gathered from the following lines, taken from "The Hue and Cry after Sir John Presbyter:" —

> "Down, Dragon-Synod with thy motley ware,
> While we do swagger for the Common Prayer,
> That dove-like embassy that wings our sense
> To heaven's gate in shape of innocence;
> Pray for the mitred authors, and defy
> These Demi-casters of Divinitie.
> For, when Sir John with Jack-of-all-trades joyns,
> His finger's thicker than the Prelate's loyns."

These lines are a fair illustration of the rough vigor which characterized the man.

Sir John Suckling wrote a few lyrics of no great merit. Robert Herrick, after being ejected by the parliamentarians from his living in Devonshire, came up to London, and published his poems under the title of "Hesperides; or, Works both Human and Divine."

The poems of Herrick are classed by Mr. Hallam among the "poetry of kisses." It would be more exact to say that they are the outcome of a lazy, amorous temperament, which can not or will not put time to better use. He candidly tells us that, —

> "He has seen, and still can prove,
> The lazy man the most doth love."

While the Long Parliament was making war and framing treaties, Herrick could only talk of the "parliament of roses." Red-handed battle was raging in every English county; but he can only bemoan "the death that is in Julia's eyes." Herrick's melody is not invariably perfect: yet there are not a few of his little poems — they are all very diminutive — which either have a beautiful tripping movement, or excel in rhythmic evenness and sweetness. The divisions of the col-

lection, after certain opening invocations to gods and goddesses, are, "Amatory Odes," "Anacreontic and Bacchanalian," and an "Epithalamium."

Col. Richard Lovelace wrote a few pretty things,[1] one or two of which are to be found in most collections; and Sir John Denham, the intimate friend of Cowley, wrote the first English descriptive poem of real merit, — "Cooper's Hill." [2]

Of Denham's other poems the chief part are translations from Virgil, Cicero, and Mancini. "The Progress of Learning," a poem in Pindaric verse, theorizes, from the point of view of a cavalier who is at the same time an admirer of Hobbes, on the obstacles which have troubled the advance of learning and refinement amongst mankind. The revival of learning, and the discredit fallen on the "lazy cells where superstition bred," promised a halcyon period; but the enemy of mankind, inspiring Loyola, Luther, and Calvin with an infernal spirit of bigotry, had dashed those hopes to the ground. Fanaticism, dislodged from the monasteries, had taken possession of the printing-press. Authority had fallen only to give place to sectaries and schismatics of a hundred types, all quarrelling with one another, and inflated with spiritual pride and a boundless presumption: —

"But seven wise men the ancient world did know:
We scarce know seven who think themselves not so."

In a poem on Lord Strafford, Denham calls him

"Three kingdoms' wonder, and three kingdoms' fear."

He also wrote some interesting memorial verses "On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death, and Burial amongst the Ancient Poets."

Only three poets took the Puritan side; but quality made up for quantity. John Milton was born in London in the year 1608. At sixteen he was sent to Cambridge, where he speedily gave proofs of an astonishing vigor and versatility of intellect by the Latin and English compositions, chiefly the former, which he produced in his college years. In spite of the precedents given

[1] See p. 431. [2] See p. 424.

by the great Italian poets, Latin was still regarded as the universal and most perfect language, not only for prose, but for poetry; and the most gifted poets of the time, Milton and Cowley, followed the example of Vida and Sanazzaro, and tried their "'prentice hand" upon hexameters and elegiacs. In these exercises, whatever Dr. Johnson[1] may say, Milton was singularly successful. So far from his Latin poems being inferior to those of Cowley, it may be doubted whether he does not surpass even Vida; for if the latter excels him in elegance and smoothness, yet in the rush of images and ideas, in idiomatic strength and variety, in every thing, in short, that constitutes originality, he is not to be compared to Milton. The elegy upon Bishop Andrewes is really a marvel, considering that it was the work of a lad of seventeen.

Milton, however, was a true lover of his native language; and in his Latin pieces he was but, as it were, preluding and trying his poetic gift, the full power of which was to be displayed in the forms of his own mother tongue. But he would write simple, unaffected English, and be the slave to no fashionable style; whatever mannerism he was afterwards to give way to was to be the offspring of his own studies and peculiar mode of thought. He expresses this determination in a vacation exercise, composed in 1627. Apostrophizing his native language, he says, —

"But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming sleight,
Which takes our late fantastics with delight;
But cull those richest robes, and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire."

[1] In his Life of Milton, Johnson writes with an evident bias of dislike, which sometimes makes him unfair. His Tory prejudices would not allow him to be just to the poet who had defended regicide.

The English language obeyed the invitation; and two years later appeared the beautiful "Ode to the Nativity."[1] In 1634 he wrote the masque of "Comus."

"Comus" was written to be acted at Ludlow Castle by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater, then Lord President of Wales. The two brothers and their sister, travelling homewards, lose their way in a thick forest. The sister, separated accidentally from her protectors, is met by the enchanter Comus, under whom is represented the worship of sense and pleasure. She resists his allurements, and refutes his arguments. Meanwhile the brothers debate the untoward occurrence, the younger being much inclined to fear, while the elder is sustained by his confidence in his sister's virtue and "saintly chastity." In the end the sister is found, and the enchanter driven away; but his spells have bound her to a magic chair, from which she can only be released by the nymph of the Severn (Sabrina) rising from her watery bed, and breaking the charm. The poem represents the triumph of virtue and philosophy over the power of the senses. The imagery is classical, and Christian ideas, as such, have no place: yet none can doubt that the morality which triumphs in "Comus" is really the morality of Christ and not that of the Stoics, or of the classical poets. For many turns of phrase, and even for some ideas, Milton is indebted to Fletcher's lovely pastoral drama of "The Faithful Shepherdess." But there is a majesty, an austere and stately beauty, about this poem, which are all Milton's own. How noble and lovely, for instance, lines like these! —

> "Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk;"

Or, —

> "How charming is divine philosophy!
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns."

"L'Allegro and Il Penseroso," fair groups of mirthful and of pensive thoughts, which the town-bred poet, intoxicated with the fresh charm of country life, gives voice to and sings to his lyre, were the fruit of his stay at Horton in Buckinghamshire, between the life at Cambridge and the journey to Italy.

[2] See p. 428.

All the rest of the shorter poems (except the sonnets and two or three Latin pieces) were in like manner composed before the breaking out of the civil war. In 1638 Milton visited Italy, and staid several months at Florence, Rome, and Naples, mixing familiarly in the literary society of those cities. The Italians were amazed at this prodigy of genius from the remote North, the beauty and grace of whose person recommended his intellectual gifts. The Marquis Manso, the friend of Tasso, said, referring to the well-known anecdote of Pope Gregory, that, if his religion were as good as his other qualifications, he would be "*non Anglus, verum angelus.*" Selvaggi, in a Latin distich, anticipated the famous encomium of Dryden;[1] and Salsilli declared that the banks of the Thames had produced a greater poet than those of the Mincio. With Galileo he had an interview at Florence. "There was it that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition."[2] The news of the increasing civil dissensions at home recalled him to England; and after his return he renounced the Muse, and flung himself with characteristic energy into the thickest of the strife. The Puritans, who as a class possessed little learning, were at that time hard pushed by Bishop Hall, Usher, and other Episcopalian disputants; when Milton appeared in their ranks, and threw not only the force and fire of his genius, but his varied and copious learning, on the yielding side. "Of Reformation in England"

[1] "Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn:
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go:
To make a third, she joined the former two."

[2] Areopagitica.

(1641), "An Apology for Smectymnuus"[1] (1642), "The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty" (1641) — these are the titles of some of his principal contributions to this controversy. Barren as was the strife, as far as regards any theoretical results directly established by it, yet whoever wishes to understand and feel the greatness of Milton must not fail to study these treatises. His prose was no "cool element:" most often it sparkles and scathes like liquid metal, yet softens here and there, and spreads out into calmer, milder passages, stamped with an inexpressible poetic loveliness. For many years, in this portion of his life, Milton gave himself up to political and religious controversy; all but one of his prose works were composed between 1640 and the Restoration.

Writing of the sonnet, Wordsworth finely says that in Milton's hand, —

> "The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains, alas! too few."

Some of these stirring sonnets were composed during the war. That addressed to Cromwell was written before the battle of Worcester, in 1651, but corrected after it, as appears from an inspection of the original manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which the ninth line originally stood thus: —

> "And twenty battles more. Yet much remains," &c.

But the pen has been drawn through the four first words, and over them is written, "And Worcester's

[1] See p. 502. The word "Smectymnuus" was formed from the initial letters of the name of five Puritan ministers — Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow — who had written a pamphlet attacking Episcopacy, to which a powerful answer had appeared from the pen of Bishop Hall.

laureat wreath;" and thus the line stands in all the printed editions.

After the king's execution, Milton entered the service of the republican government as Latin secretary, with the duty of conducting the official correspondence with foreign powers. He retained this office under the Protectorate. At the Restoration, an order was given for his prosecution; but ultimately he was allowed to retire unharmed into private life. At this time he was totally blind, having lost his eyesight, —

> "Over-plied
> In liberty's defence, my noble task,
> Wherewith all Europe rings from side to side;"

where he refers to his "Defensio Populo Anglicani," written in 1651, in reply to Salmasius. After his retirement, he lived at Bunhill Fields, in the outskirts of London, and took up again the cherished literary ambition of his youth, which had been to write a great poem, founded either upon the national mythology, or on some scriptural subject. There are several allusions to this early bias of his mind in the prose works. Thus, in the "Animadversions," &c., published in 1641, he writes: "And he that now for haste snatches up a plain ungarnished present as a thank-offering to Thee may then, perhaps, take up a harp, and sing thee an elaborate song to generations." Also in "The Reason of Church Government," &c., published in the same year, after mentioning the encouragement and praise which the Italian *literati* had given to his early efforts in verse, "I began," he says, "thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity

of nature, I might, perhaps, leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die." The whole context of this passage is of great interest for the light it throws on Milton's early conviction of the true nature of the task to which his extraordinary powers constituted his vocation.

The "Paradise Lost"[1] was first published in 1667. Although the author — from what cause is unknown — obtained a very scanty remuneration[2] from the publisher, the common supposition, that the sale of the work was extremely slow, is erroneous. Within two years from the date of publication, thirteen hundred copies had been sold; and the second edition was exhausted before 1678. But the name of Milton was too hateful in royalist ears to allow of his admirers giving public expression to their feelings under the Stuarts. Addison's papers in "The Spectator" first made the "Paradise Lost" known to a large number of readers, and established it as a household book and an English classic.

The "Paradise Regained," in four books, and the sacred drama of "Samson Agonistes,"[3] were both published in 1670. Milton died in 1674, and was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

George Wither, the second Puritan poet, was a native of Hampshire, and sold his paternal property to raise a troop of horse for the parliament. The diction of his earlier poems, particularly his beautiful songs, shows little trace of the influence of the fantastic school; but his religious poetry is full of quaintnesses and conceits.

He is the author of some satires entitled "Abuses Stript and Whipt" (1613), a youthful production, written apparently for the

[1] See p. 344.

[2] Fifteen pounds for the first two editions, numbering three thousand copies.

[3] See p. 366.

sake of attracting notice. In this he succeeded so well (probably through the offence given by his onslaught against "clergy-pride" and the ambition of churchmen) that he soon found himself arrested, and imprisoned in the Marshalsea. The satires — twenty in number, contained in two books — are written in the heroic couplet like Marston's, and have much the same inharmoniousness of metre and rudeness of diction. While in prison he wrote another satire called the "Scourge," and also "A Satyre," dedicated to the king, in which he justified his former efforts. He also wrote in prison the dramatic operetta, if so it may be called, of "The Shepheard's Hunting," which, Mr. Campbell thinks, contains the finest touches that ever came from his hasty and irregular pen. It is in five eclogues, and is evidently modelled on the "Shepheard's Calender" of Spenser.

The third poet, Andrew Marvell, who was assistant to Milton for eighteen months in the office of Latin secretary, and represented the borough of Hull in parliament after the Restoration, was at heart a thorough republican. He was a formidable political satirist, both in prose and verse, on the Whig-Puritan side, during the reign of Charles II. His miscellaneous poems were published by his widow in 1681.

Some of these are pointed, and not without grace. The ode "To his coy Mistress" is full of fancy and invention. Were our time unlimited, he says, your coyness were no crime: —

> "But at my back I always hear
> Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast eternity."

The definition of love in "The Fair Singer," though belonging to the poetry of conceit, is charmingly clever: —

> "As lines, so loves oblique, may well
> Themselves in every angle greet;
> But ours so truly parallel,
> Though infinite, can never meet.
>
> Therefore the love which us doth bind,
> But fate so enviously debars,
> Is the conjunction of the mind,
> And opposition of the stars."

The incidents of a distracted time sometimes color the verse strangely. We have the lover pleading thus with his mistress: —

"Oh, then, let me in time *compound*," —

(as the poor royalists had to do for their lands), —

"And *parly* with those conquering eyes."

His satirical poems are chiefly directed against the Dutch, the Scotch, and the Stuarts. The Dutch had the ill-luck to quarrel with both the great English parties; and the Roundhead Marvell attacks them with a bitterness of contemptuous invective which the courtier Dryden could not surpass. One of his satires begins thus: —

"Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the offscouring of the British sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when they heaved the lead."

The poetry of Milton belongs, according to its spirit, to the period before the Restoration, although much of it was actually composed later. The poets whom we have now to consider belong, both in time and in spirit, to the post-Restoration, or re-actionary school. The greatest of them — Dryden — is the most prominent figure in the literary history of the latter part of the seventeenth century; and, in describing his career, it will be easy to introduce such mention of his less gifted rivals and contemporaries as our limits will permit us to make.

Dryden was the grandson of a Northamptonshire baronet and squire, Sir Erasmus Dryden, of Canons Ashby; but his relations on both sides had adopted Puritan opinions, and he grew up to manhood under Puritan influences. From Westminster School he proceeded, in 1650, to Trinity College, Cambridge. The seven years of his College life are almost a blank in his history. Of Milton we know exactly, from his own pen, how he was employed at the corresponding period;

and can form to ourselves a tolerably accurate notion of the earnest, ascetic student, with his rapt look and beautiful features, walking in the cloisters or garden of Christ's College. But, of Dryden, the only fact of any importance that we know is, that his favorite study at this time was history, not poetry. He had begun, indeed, to string rhymes together many years before, his elegy on Lord Hastings having been written in 1649; but that feeble and artificial production must have given so little satisfaction, either to himself or to others, that we cannot wonder at his having desisted from writing poetry altogether. How unlike Pope, who —

> "Lisped in numbers, for the numbers came"!

In 1657 he came up to London, probably at the invitation of his kinsman Sir Gilbert Pickering, who stood high in the favor of Cromwell, being, according to Shadwell, "Noll's lord chamberlain." Dryden seems to have acted as secretary or amanuensis to Sir Gilbert for about two years. Upon the death of Cromwell, in September, 1658, he wrote an elegy, in thirty-six stanzas, commemorating the exploits and great qualities of the Lord Protector. It is written in a manly strain, nor is the eulogy undiscerning. For example, —

> "For from all tempers he could service draw;
> The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew;
> And, as the confidant of Nature, saw
> How she complexions did divide and brew," —

lines which well describe Cromwell's keen discernment of character. At the Restoration, the Cavaliers of course came into power, and the Puritan holders of office were ousted. Among the rest, Sir Gilbert Pickering had to retire into private life, happy to be let off so easily; and Dryden's regular occupation was gone.

At the age of twenty-eight he was thrown entirely on his own resources. Exactly twenty-eight years later the same mischance befell him; and on each occasion the largeness and vigor of his intellect enabled him to make head against the spite of fortune. Literature was to be his resource; the strong impulse of nature urged him with irresistible force to think and to write. But no kind of writing offered the chance of an immediate return, in the shape of temporal maintenance, except the dramatic. To the drama, therefore, Dryden turned, and began to write plays. Between 1662 and 1694 he produced twenty-eight plays, of which twelve were tragedies, four tragi-comedies, eight comedies, three operas, and one a masque. Perhaps his fame would have suffered but little if he had not written one. Many of them are crammed full — all are more or less tainted — with licentious language and gross allusion; and even in the finest of the tragedies one misses altogether that deep pathos which forms the inexhaustible charm of "Othello" or of "Œdipus Tyrannus," and which Dryden had not *heart* enough to communicate to his work.

In 1670 Dryden was appointed poet-laureate, in succession to Sir William Davenant, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year; raised, towards the end of Charles II.'s reign, to three hundred pounds. During the ten following years he was almost exclusively engaged in writing either plays, or critical essays on dramatic subjects. His acknowledged superiority among men of letters, and the dread of his satire, caused him to be both envied and hated, passions which in those turbulent times did not trust to the pen alone for their gratification. Dryden received the same sort of castigation which Pope narrowly escaped, and which Voltaire met with at the hands of the Duc de Rohan.

The clever, profligate Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, who wished to be considered an arbiter of literary taste, had set up by turns three dramatists — Settle, Crowne, and Otway — as rivals to Dryden. But, finding that the judgment of the public remained intractable, he attacked Dryden himself in an imitation of Horace, published in 1678. The poet replied vigorously in the preface to "All for Love." Next year appeared Sheffield's "Essay on Satire," in which Rochester was severely handled. Supposing Dryden to be the author, Rochester had him waylaid one evening near Covent Garden, on his return home from Wills's coffee-house, and severely beaten by a couple of hired bullies. In reference to this mishap Lord Sheffield wrote the following stupid and conceited couplet: —

> "Though praised and punished for another's rhymes,
> His own deserve as much applause *sometimes*."

In the thick of the excitement about the Popish Plot, Dryden, by producing his play of "The Spanish Friar," and thus pandering to the blind frenzy of the hour, placed himself almost in a position of antagonism to the court, since the Whig promoters of the plot were as little acceptable to Charles as to his brother. But he soon after made ample amends by writing "Absalom and Achitophel," the most perfect and powerful satire in our language, in which the schemes of the Whig-Puritan party, and the characters of its leading men, are exposed and caricatured.[1]

In 1682 appeared "The Medal," another satire on the Whigs; and, a few months later, the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," of which only about two hundred lines, including the portraits of Settle and Shadwell, are by Dryden; the rest being the work of an

[1] See p. 414.

inferior poet named Nahum Tate, one of those jackals that hunt with the lions of literature, but bearing marks of considerable revision by the master's hand. The "Religio Laici," published in the same year, will be spoken of presently.

In February, 1685, Charles II. died. Dryden, as in duty bound, mourned the sad event in the "Threnodia Augustalis," a long rambling elegy, in which occur a few fine lines, but which must be set down, on the whole, as mendacious, frigid, and profane. Lamentation is not the key-note of the poem: after bewailing the deprivation of so much virtue and benevolence which the world had sustained in the death of Charles II., the poet turns with alacrity to celebrate with an *Io Pœan* the accession of the illustrious James.

We are now come to the period of his life at which Dryden changed his religion. Upon this much-debated subject, the reader is referred to the candid examination of the entire question, which will be found in Sir Walter Scott's life of the poet. Scott's theory is, that, on the one hand, the inner workings of the poet's mind, as inferred from his writings, at last consistently brought him to embrace the Roman Catholic system; on the other hand, that there were many external incidents and circumstances in his position, which, in a proportion impossible to be exactly ascertained, co-operated with those internal movements to produce the final result. With regard to the first point, he quotes the poet's own confession in "The Hind and Panther:"—

"My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires;
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
Followed false lights; and, when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I; such by nature still I am:
Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame!"

The "false lights" evidently refer to the Puritan opinions in which Dryden had been bred up; and the "sparkles" struck out by his pride as clearly point to the religious speculations, originating in his own mind, some of which are disclosed in the "Religio Laici." This poem, one of the few of Dryden's which were neither written professionally, nor dedicated to or suggested by a patron, betokens a mind dissatisfied with the religion in which it had been brought up, and groping its way among clashing systems in vain endeavors after light. To one whose opinions were so unfixed, who lived, too, at the time when the great Bossuet was analyzing the "Variations of the Protestant Churches," and the virtues of Fénelon were the talk of Europe, it is easy to see, that, when the time came at which it was his manifest interest to consider the claims of the religion of the court, the arguments in favor of the claims of Rome would present themselves with more than ordinary force, because they would not find the ordinary obstacles pre-existing in his mind. The whole subject is thus summed up in the words of Scott: "While pointing out circumstances of proof that Dryden's conversion was not made by manner of bargain and sale, but proceeded upon a sincere though erroneous conviction, it cannot be denied that his situation as poet-laureate, and his expectations from the king, must have conduced to his taking his final resolution. All I mean to infer from the above statement is, that his interest and internal conviction led him to the same conclusion."

In 1687, some months after his conversion, Dryden published "The Hind and Panther," [1] a controversial allegory in heroic metre, in three books; the Roman Church being represented by the Hind, and the Church of England by the Panther. Great was the clamor

[1] See p. 398.

raised against him, and many were the answers that appeared; among which "The City Mouse and Country Mouse," the joint production of Prior and Charles Montague (afterwards Earl of Halifax), was the most successful. At the Revolution, Dryden was dismissed from his office of poet-laureate and royal historiographer, and had the mortification of seeing Shadwell the dramatist, who had been repeatedly the butt of his ridicule, — Shadwell, the hero of "MacFlecknoe" and the Og of "Absalom and Achitophel," promoted to the laurel. For the remainder of his life, Dryden was more or less harassed by the ills of poverty; but his genius shone out brighter as the end drew near. "Alexander's Feast,"[1] which has been often pronounced to be the finest lyric in the language, was written in 1697; the translation of Virgil appeared in the same year; and the "Fables," which are translations from Ovid and Boccaccio and modernizations of Chaucer, were published in March, 1700, only a few weeks before the poet's death.

Dryden's manner of life was essentially that of a man of letters. He had no taste for field sports, and did not delight in rural solitudes; nor, though he keenly watched the conflicts of parties and the development of political questions, did he ever mix personally in the turmoil of public life. Though not reserved, he was diffident and shy, and was far from cutting that brilliant figure in fashionable society which Pope, though self-educated and a *parvenu*, succeeded in doing. He rose early, spent all the fore part of the day in his own study reading or writing; then about three o'clock betook himself to Wills's coffee-house, the common resort of a crowd of wits, pamphleteers, poets, and critics. There, seated in his own arm-chair, which was moved near the window in summer and to the fireside in winter, "glori-

[1] See p. 445.

ous John" drank his bottle of port, and ruled the roast, the undoubted chief of the English literary republic.

The other poets in this post-Restoration period deserving of special mention are, Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, author of the "Essay on Translated Verse," Butler, the author of "Hudibras," and Sir William Davenant. Both Dryden and Pope praised Roscommon,[1] — the former in some fine lines (written on the publication of the "Essay" in 1680), the sense of which was rather closely followed by Pope in his "Essay on Criticism." In both panegyrics the merit of Roscommon is described to be, that he restored in Britain the authority of "wit's fundamental laws," and superseded Shakpeare's wild beauties and Milton's ruggedness by establishing the reign of classic elegance, polish, and correctness. In short, Roscommon, although his achieve-

[1] Dryden writes, after mentioning the Italian poets, —

"The French pursued their steps; and Britain, last,
In manly sweetness all the rest surpassed.
The wit of Greece, the majesty of Rome,
Appear exalted in the British loom:
The Muses' empire is restored again
In Charles's reign, and by Roscommon's pen."

And Pope, —

"But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,
And kept unconquered and uncivilized;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defied the Romans, as of old:
Yet some there were among the sounder few,
Of those who less presumed, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster, ancient cause,
And here restored wit's fundamental laws.
. . . . . .
Such was Roscommon, not more learned than good,
With manners generous as his noble blood;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And every author's merit but his own."

ments in these respects were much overrated by his eulogizers, was a kind of forerunner of Pope, and a writer of the classical school.

Samuel Butler, the son of a Worcestershire farmer, lived for some years in early life in the house of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's commanders, who furnished him with the original of "Hudibras." While staying here he composed his famous satire. Little is known with certainty about his manner of life after the Restoration. It is certain, however, that he was befriended by Buckingham, and by Dryden's patron the Earl of Dorset, and also that he passed all the latter part of his life in extreme poverty. The king, though he was extremely fond of "Hudibras," and used constantly to quote from it, suffered the author to starve with his usual selfishness and ingratitude. This famous poem which is in substance a satire on Puritans and Puritanism, may also be regarded as a burlesque on romances, the influence of "Don Quixote" being apparent; and even as in a partial sense a parody on "The Faerie Queen," the titles to the cantos being clearly imitated from those of Spenser. The political importance of the poem was great. It turned the laugh against those terrible Puritans, a handful of whom had so long held the nation down, and defeated, more effectually than cannon-balls or arguments could have done, "the stubborn crew of errant saints," —

> "Who build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun,
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery,
> And prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blows and knocks."

This famous satire is in three parts, containing three cantos each. The mere plot is slight, and may be described in a few words. The

knight Sir Hudibras, who is a Presbyterian, attended by his squire Ralpho, who belongs to the ranks of those formidable sectaries who overturned both king and parliament, sally forth to put down a bear-baiting. They come upon the rabble rout, whom the knight in a long speech bids to disperse. Their leaders, Talgol, Orsin, Trulla, &c., laugh him to scorn; a fight ensues, full of droll ups and downs, in the course of which the bear gets loose, and helps the knight in putting the crowd to flight. Presently, however, they rally, and return to the attack; Trulla defeats and disarms the knight, and he and his squire are laid by their heels in the parish stocks. Here they are visited by "the widow," the object of the knight's mercenary affections. A long conversation ensues, of which the upshot is, that, in consideration of his swearing to give himself a severe flogging, the widow causes Hudibras to be released from the stocks. Next morning the knight repairs to the place where he is to perform the promised operation. But, scruples arising within him concerning the legality of keeping his oath, he refers the case to Ralpho, who argues powerfully and lengthily in favor of the non-obligation of the knight, being a saint, to keep his oath: —

> "For all of us hold this for true:
> No faith is to the wicked due;
> For truth is precious and divine,
> Too rich a pearl for carnal swine."

Hudibras follows in the same strain. The idea presently occurs to him of taking the whipping vicariously, which Ralpho approves, but strongly demurs to becoming the substitute himself. The whipping thus falls through; but, doubting whether the widow would not find him out, the knight resolves to go to Sidrophel the conjuror, and have his fortune told. He goes; but, through his speaking contemptuously of Sidrophel's art, a fight ensues, in which the knight is victorious, disarming Sidrophel, kicking his man Whackum out of the house, and departing with much plunder. In the third part the story flags, and at last breaks down altogether. The knight again endeavors to make an impression on the widow's heart, but to no purpose. The second canto dismisses Hudibras from sight altogether, being merely a long tirade against the Puritanic "saints" and their proceedings in the civil war. In the third and last canto the knight seriously thinks of invoking the arm of the law, and of suing instead of wooing, but first indites an heroical epistle to the widow, with whose epistle in reply the poem ends.

Such is the plot; but these slight outlines are filled up, so as to compose a poem of more than eleven thousand lines, with long dialogues between Hudibras and his squire, or the widow, discussing for

the most part points of Puritanic casuistry. Thus the whole of the first canto of the second part is taken up with a conversation between Hudibras and the widow; the former urging his love, and insisting on the duty of his fair one to accept him, the latter making various objections and counter-propositions. Again: the second canto of the same part consists chiefly of a discussion between Hudibras and Ralpho on the obligation of oaths, as between the saints and the wicked. For, though Hudibras has evidently an insuperable objection to fulfilling his oath to the widow in regard to the whipping, yet he desires to extricate himself from the obligation in such a manner as that his tender and scrupulous conscience may be entirely at rest; a feat, as Butler would intimate, easy of accomplishment to the Puritanic mind. Ralpho's earnestness in drawing lines of demarcation between the saints, amongst whom he and his master were, of course, shining lights, and the sinners, is admirably described: —

> "For as on land there is no beast,
> But in some fish at sea's exprest,
> So in the wicked there's no vice
> Of which the saints have not a spice;
> And yet that thing that's pious in
> The one, in th' other is a sin."

Again, —

> "He that imposes an oath makes it,
> Not he that for convenience takes it;
> Then how can any man be said
> To break an oath he never made?"

Sir William Davenant, knighted by the king for services before Gloucester in 1643, is the author of "Gondibert," and a few minor poems. The story of "Gondibert" is unfinished; in fact, the author himself tells us in a postscript that just one-half of the poem, as it was originally designed, is presented to the reader. The scene is laid in Italy. The principal action is the courtship of the Princess Rhodalind, daughter of Aribert, king of Tuscany, in rivalry for whose love her most powerful suitors, Duke Gondibert and Prince Oswald, engage in internecine strife. Davenant seems to have been a disciple of Hobbes, and a necessitarian: we have the sage Astragon, in the second book, discoursing at great length to the purport of what follows: —

> "But penitence appears unnatural;
> For we repent what Nature did persuade,
> And we, lamenting man's continued fall,
> Accuse what Nature necessary made."

Considerable intellectual power and literary skill are evident in the structure of this poem; but as the fictitious narrative is in itself wholly uninteresting, and the springs of passion are not strongly touched, the result is but moderately satisfactory.

Heroic Plays, Comedy of Manners, Jeremy Collier.

The position of the English drama after the Restoration may be explained in a few words. The theatres had been closed ever since the Puritan party had gained the mastery in London; that is, since the year 1643. At the Restoration, they were re-opened as a matter of course. The king during his long foreign sojourn had become used to and fond of theatrical entertainments; the courtiers ostentatiously shared in the royal taste; and the long-silenced wits were only too glad of a favorable opportunity for displaying their powers. Two theatres were licensed: one, which was under the direct patronage of Charles, was called the King's; the other, which was patronized by his brother, was known as the Duke's Theatre. Dryden, who, as has been mentioned, took to writing plays at this time for a livelihood, attached himself to the former. The taste of the king was for the French school in tragedy, and the Spanish school in comedy; and the influence of both is perceptible in Dryden's plays for many years. He could not, indeed, adopt the French heroic metre — the Alexandrine — for which our language is eminently unsuited; but, retaining the ten-syllable verse of the Elizabethan dramatists, he followed Corneille and Racan in forming it into rhyming couplets. In the plot and manner of his early pieces, the Spanish taste conspicuously prevails. The high-flown sentiment, the daring enterprise, the romantic adventure, of the days of chivalry, still hold their ground in them, — still please a society which the modern critical spirit had as yet but partially invaded. These heroic plays of Dry-

den's are rightly described by Scott as "metrical romances in the form of dramas." A brief outline of the plot of "The Conquest of Granada," the most brilliant and successful among them, will best explain this definition: —

The scene is laid in the Moorish kingdom of Granada; the period is the fifteenth century, about the time of the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella. Almanzor, a peerless and invincible Moorish knight-errant, who owns no master on earth, and, amongst other enormous boasts, is made to say, —

> "I am as free as Nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran," —

nor has hitherto stooped to love, breaks in upon a fight between two Moorish factions at Granada, and by the might of his single arm puts the combatants to flight. He then offers his services to the Moorish king Boabdelin. He transfers his allegiance several times in the course of the play, from the king to his plotting brother, Abdalla, and back again; but the side, whichever it is, that he supports, with ease puts its enemies to the rout. His love, when he once yields to the passion, is as romantic as his valor. While aiding Abdalla, he takes captive Almahide, a noble lady betrothed to Boabdelin. The first glance of her eyes causes him to fall desperately in love; but, hearing of her engagement, he magnanimously resolves to release her. Later, after he has carried his sword to the side of the king, and, having provoked Boabdelin by his arrogance to order his guards to fall upon him, has been overpowered and sentenced to die, Almahide obtains his pardon as the price of her consenting to marry the king immediately. Hearing this, Almanzor would have killed himself; but Almahide lays her command upon him to live, and he obeys. After he has left the court, and the Christian armies are pressing strongly forward, a word from her recalls him; and his prowess rolls back for a time the tide of invasion. In the concluding battle the king is slain; and Almanzor recognizes in the Spanish general, after nearly killing him, his own father, from whom he has been separated in infancy. Almahide and he become Christians, and agree to marry when her year of widowhood is expired.

Such was the material of which Dryden's plays were composed down to the year 1671, — a notable epoch in

his dramatic career. The heroic play, it must be evident, from its tumid exaggerated style, offered a broad mark for a clever satirist; and its weak points were accordingly seized with great effect by the Duke of Buckingham and his coadjutors Sprat and Butler, in a play produced in that year. This was the famous comedy of "The Rehearsal," in which Dryden himself figures under the character of Bayes. The poet, who, for one of the *genus irritibile*, was singularly free from personal vanity, felt that he had received a home-thrust, remained silent, and speedily abandoned the line of the heroic drama. But he did not forget his obligations to Buckingham, and repaid them with interest a few years later, when he drew the portrait of Zimri in "Absalom and Achitophel."

In his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," published in 1668, Dryden had earnestly argued that rhyme, which he calls the most noble verse, is alone fit for tragedy, which he calls the most noble species of composition; and had therefore, by implication, condemned the use of blank verse by Shakspeare. But as his judgment grew clearer, and his taste more refined, he saw cause for changing his opinion. Some striking lines in the prologue to the tragedy of "Aurungzebe," produced in 1675, mark this point in the progress of his mind. He is inclined, he says, to damn his own play, —

> "Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
> But he has now another taste of wit;
> And to confess a truth, though out of time,
> Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
> Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
> And nature flies him like enchanted ground;
> What verse can do, he has performed in this,
> Which he presumes the most correct of his:
> But, spite of all his pride, a secret shame
> Invades his breast at Shakspeare's sacred name;

> And, when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
> He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
> And to an age less polished, more unskilled,
> Does with disdain the foremost honors yield."

In his next play, "All for Love," he abandoned rhyme, and never afterwards returned to it. The influence of Shakspeare becomes more and more perceptible in the later plays, particularly in "Don Sebastian," the finest of all Dryden's tragedies, produced in 1690.[1] Thus the attempt to divert the taste of the play-going public from British to French and Spanish models was renounced by the projector himself, and replaced by a steady and continuous effort to raise Shakspeare to his just rank in the estimation of his countrymen. It need hardly be said that, up to the present time, the work of appreciation commenced by Dryden has gone on in an unbroken development.

Thomas Otway is the author of nine plays, of which six are tragedies and three comedies. The latter are of small account; but among the tragedies "Caius Marius," "The Orphan," and "Venice Preserved," hold — especially the last — high rank among English dramas. The generous, open character of the gallant Pierre, the treachery of Jaffier his friend, and the passionate affection of Belvidera, supply tragic elements which Otway has worked into the texture of his play with no ordinary skill. The interest of the piece turns on the concoction and discovery of a plot to overthrow the Venetian senate, — a subject which was doubtless suggested by the tremendous excitement of the Popish Plot, then (1681) in the full swing of its career of imposture, panic, and judicial murder. One of the characters, Antonio, is made to say, "I'll prove there's a plot with a vengeance. . . . That there is a plot, surely by this time no man that hath eyes or understanding in his head will presume to doubt." This was the sort of language continually in the mouths of the vile witnesses for the plot, and their supporters in parliament.

Poor Nat Lee, a sadly irregular liver, wrote eleven tragedies,

[1] Chief plays of Dryden: The Indian Queen, Conquest of Granada, Aurungzebe, All for Love, Don Sebastian, tragedies; the Rival Ladies and the Spanish Friar, tragi-comedies; Sir Martin Marall, An Evening's Love, and Marriage à la Mode, comedies.

besides having a considerable share in two which are ascribed to Dryden, — "Œdipus," and "The Duke of Guise." "The Rival Queens" and "Theodosius" are considered his best pieces. Addison says of him, "There was none better turned for tragedy than our author, if, instead of favoring the impetuosity of his genius, he had restrained it, and kept it within proper bounds." Thomas Shadwell, the butt of Dryden's satire as Og in "Absalom and Achitophel," and again as MacFlecknoe, the "true blue Protestant poet," who supplanted Dryden himself as poet-laureate after the Revolution, wrote sixteen plays, of which thirteen are comedies. "The Virtuoso" and the "Lancashire Witches" long held their ground on the comic stage. Elkanah Settle, worthless (unless he is much belied) both as a man and as a poet, satirized as Doeg in "Absalom and Achitophel," wrote fifteen plays, chiefly tragedies, of which the most noted was "The Empress of Morocco." John Crowne wrote a tragedy of some mark, "Thyestes." The comedies of Mrs. Aphra Behn had a great run in their day, but are now forgotten.

In comedy, however, a new school arose, of which the tone and form may certainly be traced to the unrivalled genius of Molière. The "comedy of manners," of which Congreve, Etherege, and Wycherley were in our present period the chief representatives, exhibited, in polished and witty prose, the modes of acting, thinking, and talking prevalent in the fashionable society of the time. That society was a grossly immoral one; and the plays which reflected its image were no less so. Congreve, the most eminent writer of this school, produced only five plays, one of which, "The Mourning Bride," is a tragedy. His comedies are, "The Old Bachelor" (1693), "The Double Dealer" (1694), "Love for Love" (1695), and "The Way of the World" (1700). Congreve was the intimate friend of Dryden, who appointed him his literary executor, and in some well-known lines entreated him to be watchful over his memory: —

> "But you, whom every Muse and grace adorn,
> Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
> Be kind to my remains; and, oh! defend,
> Against your judgment, your departed friend!

Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you,
And take for tribute what these lines express:
You merit more, nor could my love do less."

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the immorality of the stage began to be thought intolerable. In this respect the stage had remained stationary since the Restoration, while the morals of English society had been gradually becoming purer. This general feeling found an exponent in Jeremy Collier, a non-juring[1] divine, who wrote in 1698 his "Short View of the Immortality and Profaneness of the Stage." Both Dryden and Congreve were vigorously assailed in this work on account of their dramatic misdeeds. Dryden magnanimously pleaded guilty to the main charge, in the preface to his "Fables," published in 1700, although he maintained that Collier had in many places perverted his meaning by his glosses, and was "too much given to horse-play in his raillery." "I will not say," he continues, "that *the zeal of God's house has eaten him up;* but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility." After a time, Collier's attack produced its effect; the public taste became purer; the intellect of the country became ashamed of the stage, and turned to cultivate other branches of literature; and from that time the English drama tended downwards to that condition of feebleness and inanity which reached its maximum about a hundred years later.

Learning; Usher, Selden, Gale, &c.

The state of learning in England during this period was not so high as it has been generally esteemed.

[1] That is, one who refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William.

Selden says in his "Table-Talk," "The Jesuits and the lawyers of France, and the Low Country men, have engrossed all learning: the rest of the world make nothing but homilies." He was glancing here at the eloquent divines, Andrewes, Hall, Taylor, &c. There was, indeed, abundance of *illustrative*, but little *productive* learning. The divines above mentioned, in their sermons, ransack for illustrations the whole series of the Greek and Latin authors, and show no slight acquaintance with councils and Fathers; but they use all this learning merely to serve some immediate purpose; they do not digest or analyze it with a view to obtaining from it permanent literary results. Usher, the Irishman, is the chief exception. James Usher, one of the three first matriculated students of Trinity College, Dublin,[1] upon its opening in 1593, rose to be Protestant primate of Armagh; but he left Ireland in 1640, and, excusing himself on the plea of the social confusion which prevailed, never afterwards returned to it. His treatise, "De Ecclesiarum Britannicarum Primordiis," and his celebrated "Annales" (a digest of universal history from the creation to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus), are works of solid learning and research, which even yet are not superseded. Selden himself possessed a great deal of abstruse learning; probably no Englishman ever dived so deep into rabbinical literature, or was so completely at home in certain branches of antiquarian research. But he cannot be compared with the great Dutchman of the age, Hugo Grotius, whom he met in controversy,[2] nor with the Spanish

[1] Usher actively aided in the formation of the Trinity College Library; and his MSS., given after his death to the college by Charles II., form a valuable portion of its collections. See his life by Aikin.

[2] Grotius wrote a book called Mare Liberum, asserting the right of free fishery in the narrow seas near the English coast; to which Selden replied by his Mare Clausum, denying that right.

Jesuit Suarez. He was narrower, more lawyer-like, and less philosophical, than either of those two great men. The names of Gale, Gataker, Potter, and Stanley are the most respectable that we can produce in the department of scholarship during the remainder of the period. Potter's "Greek Antiquities," first published in 1697, was a text-book in all British schools for nearly a century and a half, having been superseded only within these few years by the fuller and more critical treatises for which German thought and erudition have prepared the way. Of Bentley, the prince of English scholars, we shall speak in the next chapter.

Prose Writings. — Fiction: "Pilgrim's Progress;" Oratory.

In the department of prose fiction, this period, but for one remarkable work, is absolutely sterile. In the exciting times of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, men were in too earnest a mood to spend much time in the contemplation of imaginary scenes and characters. Nor, during the twenty-eight years which separated the Revolution from the Restoration, had the agitation of society subsided sufficiently to admit of the formation of a novel-reading public; by which term is meant that large class of persons, easy in their circumstances, but victims to *ennui* from the tranquillity and uniformity of their daily avocations, who seek in fiction the excitement which the stability of the social system has banished from their actual life. It must be remembered, also, that the drama was the surest road to popularity for an inventive genius up to the end of the century. Soon afterwards the stage fell into discredit; and the novel immediately appeared to fill the vacant place.

One exception, however, to this rule of sterility, is to be found in Bunyan's celebrated "Pilgrim's Progress." John Bunyan, a native of Elstow, near Bedford, was

of obscure origin, and was brought up to the trade of a tinker. His youth, according to his own account, was wild and vicious, but having been impressed by the sermon of a Baptist preacher, at which he was accidentally present, he was led to enter into himself, and gradually reformed his life. Forsaking the Church of England, he joined the Baptists, and became a preacher among them. When, after the Restoration, severe laws were passed against nonconformity, Bunyan, refusing to be silenced, was thrown into Bedford Jail, where he was detained twelve years. Here it was that he wrote his famous allegory, the object of which is to represent, under the figure of a journey taken by a pilgrim, the course of a Christian's life in his passage through this world to the world to come. No original work in the English language has had a greater circulation than the "Pilgrim's Progress," nor been translated into a greater number of foreign languages. The work was first published complete in 1684; Bunyan died in 1688. It is needless to describe a book so well known; but I may remark that there seems a great falling-off in the account of the pilgrimage of Christiana and her sons, as compared with that of the pilgrimage of Christian. In truth, it appears from the poetical introduction to the second part, that the good man was excited and elated in spirit in no small degree by the extraordinary reception which his Christian had met with; he was conscious that greatness had been thrust upon him: and one misses accordingly, in the second part, something of the delightful freshness, the naturalness, the entire unconscious devotion of heart and singleness of purpose, which are so conspicuous in the first part. But what simple, equable, sinewy English the "inspired tinker" writes! what fulness of the Christian doctrine is in him! what clear insight into many forms of the

Christian character! what thorough understanding of a vast variety of temptations, fleshly and spiritual!

Under the head of Oratory we find scarcely any thing deserving of mention. Cromwell's speeches, with their designed ambiguity, their cloudy pietism, their involved long-winded sentences, are hardly readable, in spite of Mr. Carlyle's editorial industry. The speeches given in Clarendon's History are often very interesting; but the difficulty of knowing how much may be the author's own composition detracts, of course, from their value. Pamphlets issued in shoals from the press during all this period.

History and Biography: Milton, Ludlow, Clarendon, &c., Wood's "Athenæ," Pepys, Evelyn, &c;

In our last notice of historical writing, it appeared that, in the first quarter of the century, the best of our historians had written on the affairs of Turkey and on the ancient world. But as the century wore on, and the shadow of the civil war began to darken the sky, English contemporary history became a subject of such absorbing and pressing interest, that our writers had no thought to spare for that of foreign nations and distant times. Fuller, Milton, Ludlow, May, Whitlocke, Rushworth, and Clarendon,[1] besides many inferior writers, wrote entirely, so far as they were historians at all, upon English affairs. Thomas Fuller, a clergyman of great wit and originality, wrote a "Church History of Britain from the birth of Jesus Christ until the year 1648;" this work was published in 1656. Milton's "History of England" is but a fragment, extending "from the first traditional beginning to the Norman Conquest." Ludlow was one of Cromwell's generals, and signed the warrant for Charles I.'s execu-

[1] For some remarks on Clarendon's History, see p. 480.

tion; his "Memoirs," written during his exile in Switzerland, relating, for the most part, to events in which he had himself been an actor, were first published after his death in 1698. John May, a lawyer, described the civil strife, both in parliament and in the field, from the parliamentary point of view; his work, published about 1650, is described by Hallam as a kind of contrast to that of Clarendon. Bulstrode Whitlocke, one of the commissioners of the Great Seal under Cromwell, composed some dull but in many respects important memoirs, which were first published in 1682. Rushworth's "Historical Collections," a perfect mine of information, appeared in 1659. He was a clerk in the House of Commons, and for many years was in the habit of taking notes of "speeches and passages at conferences in parliament, and from the king's own mouth what he spoke to both houses, and was upon the stage continually an eye and an ear witness of the greatest transactions."[1] His Collections range over the period from 1618 to 1644.

Of works subsidiary to history, e.g., biographies, personal memoirs, diaries, &c., we meet with a considerable number. The most important among them is the well-known "Athenæ Oxonienses" of Anthony à Wood, a "History of all the Writers and Bishops educated at Oxford from 1500 to 1695." Fuller's well-known biographical work on the "Worthies of England," containing sketches of about eighteen hundred individuals, — among others, of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare, — arranged under the several counties of England and Wales, appeared in 1662, the year after his death. Izaak Walton, better known for his "Treatise on Angling," wrote lives of several eminent Anglican divines, including Hooker, Donne, and Sanderson. Baxter's

[1] Wood's Athenæ.

"Reliquiæ Baxterianæ," a curious autobiography, confused, however, in arrangement and badly edited, first appeared in 1696. All the material portions of it are given in Orme's Life of Baxter. The curious "Diary" of Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, extending over the years 1660–1669, was first given to the world in 1825, having lain veiled in its original cipher, till raked out of the MS. repository of the Pepysian Library, and deciphered under the superintendence of Lord Braybrooke. Andrew Marvell in his "Seasonable Argument," printed in 1677, thus disposes of Pepys, who was then member for the borough of Castle Rising: "Castle Rising: Samuel Pepys, once a taylor, then serving-man to the Lord Sandwitch, now secretary to the Admiralty, got by passes and other illegal wayes 40,000*l*." It was not Samuel, however, but his father, who was the tailor. John Evelyn, a country gentleman skilled in the mysteries of planting and landscape-gardening, is the author of a "Diary," first published in 1818, which, among other matters, contains an interesting account of the great fire of London, of which he was an eye-witness.

We have few or no narratives of adventure, by sea or land, to record in connection with this period. A time of civil war concentrates the thoughts and the activity of men upon their own country, just as in the systole of the heart the blood all flows together to the vital centre. In tranquil times, the counter movement — the diastole — sets in; and the energies of many of the most stirring and gifted persons in the nation are turned outwards, and employed over wide and remote areas in the search of excitement, or the investigation of nature.

Theology: Hall, Jeremy Taylor, Bull, Baxter, &c.

This is the Augustan period of Anglican divinity. If we examine the literature of the controversy that raged, in this as in the previous period, between the Church of England and the Puritans, we shall find that, if we put aside the writings of Milton, the Episcopalian writers immeasurably excelled their opponents, both in talent and learning. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, comes next for mention in order of time after Bishop Andrewes. By his reply to the pamphlet produced by five Puritan ministers, who wrote under the fictitious name of "Smectymnuus,"[1] he drew upon himself the fierce invectives of Milton. His "Meditations" and "Characters" will be noticed in the next section. Ejected by the Puritans from the see of Norwich in 1643, he retired to a small estate at Higham, where he died at a very advanced age in 1656.

Jeremy Taylor, the most eloquent of English writers, was born at Cambridge in 1613. Like nearly all the Anglican divines of this period, he inclined to the tenets of Arminius, a Dutch theologian, who died in 1608, and whose opinions were vehemently anathematized after his death by the Calvinistic synod of Dort. If asked *what* precisely the Arminians held, one might answer, as Morley is said to have done[2] when a country squire put him the question, "All the best bishoprics and deaneries in England." It will be sufficient, however, to say that Arminianism was a species of Pelagianism, and arose by way of re-action against the predestinarian extravagances of the Calvinists. Coleridge gives the following graphic account of the English Arminians: "Towards the close of the reign of our first James, and during the period from the accession of Charles I. to the restoration of his profligate son,

[1] See p. 180, *n.* [2] Clarendon's Autobiography.

there arose a party of divines, Arminians (and many of them Latitudinarians) in their creed, but devotees of the throne and the altar, soaring High Churchmen and ultra royalists. Much as I dislike their scheme of doctrine, and detest their principles of government, both in Church and State, I cannot but allow that they formed a galaxy of learning and talent, and that among them the Church of England finds her stars of the first magnitude. Instead of regarding the Reformation established under Edward VI. as imperfect, they accused the Reformers, some of them openly, but all in their private opinions, of having gone too far; and while they were willing to keep down (and, if they could not reduce him to a primacy of honor, to keep out) the Pope, . . . they were zealous to restore the hierarchy, and to substitute the authority of the fathers, canonists, and councils of the first six or seven centuries, and [some of the] later doctors and schoolmen, for the names of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, and the systematic theologians who rejected all testimony but that of their Bible."[1]

Taylor's earlier works, written in the lifetime of Charles I., while he was (to use Coleridge's phrase) "ambling on the high road of preferment," were all of the High Church school; that is, they were directed to the defence of the sacred character of Episcopacy, and to the vindication of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England against the Puritans. But during the Protectorate he published a work of a very different complexion. "Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis." This was his famous "Liberty of Prophesying," a treatise on toleration, in which he argued that the state should tolerate all sects which agreed to receive the Apostles' Creed as their common standard of

[1] Literary Remains, vol. iii. p. 385.

faith. This was nothing more than a political application of the view propounded by Chillingworth in his "Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation" (published in 1637), to the effect that the profession of Christianity ought to involve nothing more than subscription to this creed. Milton's "Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," published in 1644, should be compared with the "Liberty of Prophesying;" the former being a plea for a free press, the latter a plea for freedom of public worship. Coleridge remarks, "The Liberty of Prophesying" is an admirable work, in many respects, and calculated to produce a much greater effect on the many than Milton's treatise on the same subject. On the other hand, Milton is throughout unmixed truth; and the man who in reading the two does not feel the contrast between the single-mindedness of the one, and the *strabismus* in the other, is — in the road of preferment."[1]

After the Restoration, Taylor was appointed Protestant Bishop of Down. Episcopacy was now again dominant; and we find Taylor "basely disclaiming and disavowing the principle of toleration," and excusing himself as best he could for his late liberalism. Of his remaining works, the most remarkable are the "Holy Living" and the "Holy Dying,"[2] devotional treatises, of which it is impossible not to admire the depth of thought, the fervor, and the eloquence. The "Ductor Dubitantium" is a manual of casuistry, and the "Golden Grove" a collection of prayers and litanies, with an appendix containing hymns for festivals. Taylor died in 1667.

The discouraged Puritans felt little inclination to renew those controversies on church government which events had so decisively settled one way; and, besides,

[1] Literary Remains, vol. iii. p. 20.

[2] See p. 500.

the great power and commanding influence which the Roman Church progressively acquired during the reign of Louis XIV. alarmed all Protestant bodies on this side into an unacknowledged but valid alliance against the common antagonist. If Baxter thundered from the Presbyterian camp, the Anglican bishops and divines were not less vigilant, copious, and argumentative. Isaac Barrow wrote his learned work on "The Supremacy;" and George Bull, not yet a bishop, addressed to the Countess of Newburgh his "Vindication of the Church of England from the Errors of the Church of Rome;" and Burnet, with an express controversial intention, published in 1679 and 1681 his "History of the Reformation," for which he received the thanks of both houses of Parliament. However, the most remarkable theological works of the last quarter of the century were rather directed against infidelity, or at least against opinions subsisting on the outermost verge of Christianity, than either against Puritanism or Popery. And these works, as we shall see, form a link of transition between the theology of this age and that of the next, that *seculum rationalisticum*, when theology will have to defend, not the mere outworks and dispensable additions, but the very body of the fortress. Bishop Bull's "Defensio Fidei Nicenæ" (1685) is a systematic endeavor to prove, against the Arian writers who were now beginning to make a stir both abroad and in England, that the Christian writers who lived before the Council of Nice (A.D. 325), in spite of occasional looseness and vagueness of language, held really that very doctrine respecting the Trinity which is affirmed in the Nicene Creed. The "Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ" (1694) is a work of similar scope: it is to elucidate and set forth the judgment of the Church in every age respecting Christ's divinity.

Robert Nelson, a friend of Bull's, sent this work in 1699 to the great Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux; and, in a pleasant cordial letter of thanks, Bossuet, after stating that he desired to express not his own sense merely, but that of the French bishops in general, of the obligations under which "le Docteur Bullus" had laid the Christian world, expressed his surprise that so learned and penetrating a mind could fail to recognize the claims of the existing Catholic Church to his allegiance. Bull replied to these expressions in a short pamphlet called "Corruptions of the Church of Rome;" but Bossuet was dead before it was finished.[1] Bull also wrote "Animadversions" on the works of the Unitarian Gilbert Clarke; and "Harmonia Apostolica" (1669), an attempt to reconcile the passages respecting justification found in the writings of St. Paul and St. James.

Touched, perhaps, by the ungenerous attitude which the Church, restored by Presbyterian aid, held towards gagged and persecuted Nonconformity, after the passing of the repressive acts consequent upon the Restoration, the purer and nobler minds yearned for some scheme of comprehension, under which, concessions being made on both sides, the greater part of the Nonconformists might be brought within the pale of the Church. Archbishop Leighton, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, and Bishop Wilkins were the principal men of this school: they were called the Latitudinarian divines. Leighton, son of the unhappy Presbyterian who was cruelly mutilated by sentence of the Star Chamber in 1629, was one of the most saintly men that ever gave living and practical proof of the divine power of Christianity. He was on terms of the most intimate friendship with Bishop Burnet, who declares, in the

[1] See the Life of Bishop Bull, by Nelson.

"History of his Own Times," that he "reckoned his early knowledge of him, and long and intimate conversation with him, that continued to his death for twenty-three years, amongst the greatest blessings of his life; for which he knew he must give account to God in the great day, in a most particular manner." Leighton's chief work is the "Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter," which drew forth the ardent admiration of Coleridge. Of Cudworth and More we shall have to speak in another place.

Pearson is the author of a well-known exposition of the Apostles' Creed (1659). He was a man of vast learning, fitter, according to Burnet, to be a divine than a bishop. His vindication of the authenticity of the Epistles of Ignatius is a very masterly production. Lightfoot's "Hora Hebraicæ" and "Harmony of the Four Gospels" are works of a different kind. In these, the writer's profound acquaintance with rabbinical literature enables him to throw a flood of light on the various Jewish usages and rites current in Palestine at the time of the Christian era, and referred to in the New Testament, as well as upon obscure points in the topography.

Two thousand Presbyterian ministers were ejected from their parishes in 1662, under the Act of Uniformity. Among them the most eminent was Richard Baxter, a voluminous but not very instructive writer, except where he confines himself to themes purely devotional. He is the author of a well-known manual of religious meditation, "The Saint's Everlasting Rest" (1649). In the long series of his writings against Popery occur such titles as "A Winding-Sheet for Popery" (1657), "The Grotian Religion Discovered" (in which he censures Grotius' leanings towards Rome), "The Certainty of Christianity without Pope-

ry" (1672), "Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction" (1691), &c. Tillotson — no mean authority — says of Baxter, that "he loved to abound in his own sense, could by no means be brought off his own apprehensions and thoughts, but would have them to be the rule and standard for all other men."

Philosophy: Hobbes, Locke.

Though the philosophical teaching of the English universities remained *in statu quo* during this period, speculation was common among cultivated minds, and developed in certain branches of inquiry marked and important results. In metaphysics occur the name of Thomas Hobbes, and the still more famous name of John Locke. Political reasoning was earnestly followed by Milton, Hobbes, Sidney, Harrington, Filmer, and Locke. Essay-writing was attempted by Feltham, and more successfully by Bishop Hall and Sir Thomas Browne. Lastly, the "new philosophy," as it was called in that age, that is, the philosophy of experiment, received a strong impulse through the incorporation, in 1662, of the Royal Society.

Hobbes, the "philosopher of Malmesbury," was born in the year of the Spanish Armada, and is said to have owed the nervous timidity of his constitution to the terror with which his mother regarded the approach of the invading host. After a residence of five years at Oxford, he travelled on the Continent, and made the acquaintance of several eminent men. Returning to England, he devoted himself to the careful study of the classical historians and poets. He early conceived a dislike to the democratical or movement party of that day, and in 1628 published a translation of Thucydides, "that the follies of the Athenian democrats might be made known to his fellow-citizens." For the

greater portion of his long life, after attaining to manhood, he resided as a tutor or as a friend in the family of the Earls of Devonshire. The stormy opening of the Long Parliament, in 1640, led him to apprehend civil war, from which his timid nature instinctively shrank: he accordingly went over to France, and took up his abode at Paris. Among his philosophical acquaintances there were Gassendi and Father Mersenne. The former was as great a sceptic as himself; the latter, he says,[1] once, when he was dangerously ill, tried to make him a Roman Catholic, but without the least success. His political treatise, "De Cive," was published at Paris in 1646. "The Leviathan," containing his entire philosophical system, appeared in 1651; the "De Corpore," a physiological work, in 1655; and the "De Homine" in 1658. At the age of eighty he wrote his "Behemoth," a history of the civil war; and, about the same time, a Latin poem on the rise and growth of the Papal power. In his eighty-seventh year he published a metrical version of the "Odyssey," and in the following year one of the "Iliad;" both, however, are worthless. He died in 1679, being then ninety-one years old.

Cudworth, who has been already mentioned as one of the Latitudinarian divines, takes rank among the philosophers on account of his "Intellectual System of the Universe" (1678), a work designed to be in three parts, and to refute three several doctrines which he calls "Fatalisms." The first is that of an atheistic fate or necessity, which, with Lucretius, accounts for the material world by the fortuitous meeting and interaction of atoms. The second is that of a divine fate immoral, which admits a God, but denies him to be

[1] See his curious Latin autobiography, prefixed to the edition of his works, by Sir W. Molesworth.

good or just. The third is that of a divine fate moral, which admits God to be good and just, and allows the reality of moral distinctions, but nevertheless considers all human actions as inevitably concatenated and necessary. But, of these three parts, Cudworth only executed the first, the argument against atheism; nevertheless, as he considered it right always to state the arguments of his adversaries fully and in their own words, his work is one of unwieldy bulk.

Few names occur in the history of our literature which are more noteworthy than that of John Locke, because there are few writers to whose influence important changes or advances in general opinion, upon divers important questions, can be so certainly and directly attributed. His political doctrines have been persistently carried into practice by his own country ever since his death, and recently by other countries also; and the results have — to outward appearance, at least — been singularly encouraging. By his famous "Essay on the Human Understanding," he effectually checked the tendency to waste the efforts of the mind in sterile metaphysical discussions, and opened out a track of inquiry which the human mind has earnestly prosecuted ever since, with ever-increasing confidence in the soundness of the method, considered as a testing process, applicable to matters of fact. Lastly, his "Treatise on Education," from which Rousseau is said to have largely borrowed in his "Emile," contains the first suggestion of a large number of those improvements, both in the theory and practice of education, which the present age has seen effected.

Locke resided, for many years after leaving Oxford, in the house of his patron and friend, Lord Shaftesbury, the Achitophel of Dryden's satire, whose character the poet portrayed in those famous lines: —

"Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pygmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.[1]

Sharing the Whig opinions of his patron, Locke came in also for his full share of the enmity of the court, which even demanded, in 1685, his extradition from the States-General of Holland, to which country he had followed Shaftesbury after his disgrace in 1682. His friends, however, concealed him; and Locke had the satisfaction of returning to England in the fleet of the conquering William of Orange. Strange, that of the two greatest literary Englishmen of that day, — John Locke and John Dryden, — the resemblance of whose portraits must have struck many an observer, the one should date his personal advancement, and the triumph of the cause to which he adhered, from the same event which brought dismissal, ruin, and humiliation to the other!

Locke's own account of the origin of the "Essay" is interesting. In the prefatory Epistle to the Reader, he says, "Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this Essay, I should tell thee that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the com-

[1] Absalom and Achitophel, Part I.

pany, who all readily assented; and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting, gave the first entrance into this discourse; which, having been thus begun by chance, was continued by entreaty, written by incoherent parcels, and, after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humor or occasions permitted; and at last, in a retirement where an attendance on my health gave me leisure, it was brought into that order thou now seest it."

The order in which Locke's principal works appeared was as follows: his first "Letter on Toleration" was published in Holland in 1688; the "Essay on the Human Understanding" appeared in 1689; the two "Treatises on Government,"[1] in 1690; the "Thoughts upon Education" in 1693; and the treatise on the "Reasonableness of Christianity" in 1695. Locke died unmarried at the house of his friend Sir Francis Masham, in Essex, in the year 1704.

Of the many remarkable works on political science, to which this agitated period gave birth, we shall have occasion to speak more particularly in the second part of this work. Speaking generally, these works represent the opinions of five parties, cavalier Tories and philosophical Tories, Puritan Whigs and Constitutional Whigs, and philosophical Republicans. Sir Robert Filmer, author of the "Patriarcha,"[2] in which the doctrine of "the right divine of kings to govern wrong" was pushed to its extreme, was the chief writer of the first party; Hobbes represented the second, Milton and Algernon Sidney the third, Locke the fourth, and Harrington the fifth. Milton's chief political treatises are, "The Tenure of Kings and Magis-

[1] See p. 510.

[2] See p. 508.

trates" (1649), and "The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth" (1660). Harrington's "Oceana," the name by which he designates England, as his imagination painted her after being regenerated by republicanism, was published in 1656. The Protector's government at first refused to allow it to appear: but Cromwell, at the request of his favorite daughter Elizabeth, gave his consent to the publication, coupled, however, with the dry remark, that "what he had won by the sword he should not suffer himself to be scribbled out of."

Essay-Writing: Hall, Feltham, Browne.

The examples of Bacon and Burton were followed by several gifted men in this period, who preferred jotting down detached thoughts on a variety of subjects, making, as it were, "Guesses at Truth" in a variety of directions, to the labor of concentrating their faculties upon a single intellectual enterprise. Thus Bishop Hall wrote, in the early part of the century, "Three Centuries of Meditations and Vows," each century containing a hundred short essays or papers. Feltham's "Resolves" ("resolve," in the sense of "solution of a problem"), published in 1637, is a work of the same kind.

From the fierce semi-political Christianity of the Puritans, and the official historical Christianity of the Churchmen, it is refreshing to turn to the philosophical and genial system of faith confessed in the "Religio Medici" of the good Sir Thomas Browne. Browne was a mystic and an idealist; he loved to plunge into the abysses of some vast thought, such as the Divine wisdom or the Divine eternity, and pursue its mazes until he was forced to cry an "O altitudo!" and instead of being tempted to materialism by the necessary inves-

tigations of his profession, — investigations which he evidently pursued with keen zest, and in perfect steadiness of judgment, — he regarded all the secondary laws which he discovered, or beheld in operation, as illustrations of the regular government of the Power whose personality, and disengaged freedom, and supremacy over the laws through which He ordinarily works, were to him antecedent truths of conscience and reason. "The Religio Medici," which had already appeared in a surreptitious and unauthorized form, was first published by its author in 1643. In the first few pages, his tenderness and charity towards the Roman Church, and his genial and innate repugnance to the spirit of Puritanic bitterness, are made apparent. "We have reformed from them," he says, "not against them." His own temper, he admits, inclines him to the use of form and ceremonial in devotion. "I am, I confess, naturally inclined to that which misguided zeal terms superstition. . . . I could never hear the Ave Mary bell without an elevation." On the whole, he finds that no church "squares unto his conscience" so well in every respect as the Church of England, whose Articles he thoroughly embraces, while following his own reason where she and the Scripture are silent. Though at present free, as he alleges, from the taint of any heretical opinion, he entertained in his youth various singular tenets, among which were, the death of the soul together with the body, until the resurrection of both at the Day of Judgment; the ultimate universal restoration of all men, as held by Origen; and the propriety of prayers for the dead. But he declares that there was never a time when he found it difficult to believe a doctrine merely because it transcended and confounded his reason. "Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith." He can answer

all objections with the maxim of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est*, and is glad that he did not live in the age of miracles, when faith would have been thrust upon him almost without any merit of his own. He collects (§§ 15–19) his divinity from two books, — the Bible and Nature. Yet he is not disposed so to deem or speak of Nature as to veil behind her the immanence and necessary action of God in all her phenomena. "Nature is the art of God." Again, he will not, with the vulgar, ascribe any real power to chance or fortune ("it is we that are blind, not fortune"), which is but another name for the settled and predetermined evolution of visible effects from causes the knowledge of which is inaccessible to us. He could himself (§21) produce a long list of difficulties and objections in the way of faith, many of which were never before started. But if these objections breed, at any time, doubts in his mind, he combats such misgivings, "not in a martial posture, but on his knees."

From this description of the contents of the first few sections, the reader may form some notion of the peculiar and most original vein of thought which runs through the book. As the first part treats of faith, so the second gives the author's meditations on the virtue of charity. A delightful ironical humor breaks out occasionally, as in the advice which he gives to those who desire to be strengthened in their own opinions. "When we desire to be informed, 'tis good to contest with men above ourselves; but, to confirm and establish our opinions, 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own, that the frequent spoils and victories over their reasons may settle in ourselves an esteem and confirmed opinion of our own."

The treatise on vulgar errors, "Pseudodoxia Epidemica," is an amusing examination of a great number of

popular customs and received explanations, which, after holding their ground for ages during the long night of science and philosophy, were now breaking down on all sides under the attacks of the enfranchised intellect. "The Garden of Cyrus" is an abstruse dissertation on the wonderful virtue and significance of the quincuncial form. This is mere mysticism, and of no more value than the dreams of the Pythagoreans as to the virtue of particular numbers.

Physical Science.

The present Royal Society, incorporated, with a view to the promotion of physical science, in 1662, arose out of some scientific meetings held at Oxford in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, the President of Wadham College. They soon had the honor of numbering among their fellows the great Newton, some of whose principal discoveries were first made known to the world in their "Proceedings." Newton was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; in the chapel of which society may be seen a noble statue of him by Roubillac, with the inscription, "Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit."

CHAPTER VI.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

We will commence, as in the last period, with a brief summary of the political history.

The opening of the century beheld the firm establishment of the state of things brought in at the Revolution of 1688, by the passing of the Act of Settlement, limiting the succession to the crown to Sophia, wife of the elector of Hanover, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants. Upon the accession of Anne in 1702, a Tory ministry came into power for a short time. But its principal member — the able and unprincipled Godolphin — passed over to the Whigs; and it was Whig policy which engaged the nation in the war of the Spanish succession. Marlborough, the great Whig general, was closely connected with Godolphin by marriage. Every one has heard of the victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde. The Whig ministry was dismissed in 1710; and their Tory successors, Harley Earl of Oxford, and St. John Lord Bolingbroke, concluded the peace of Utrecht in 1713. But at the death of Anne, in the following year, the Tory ministers, who showed symptoms of favoring the claims of the Pretender (the son of James II.), were at once hurled from power; and the long period of Whig rule commenced, which only ended with the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole, in 1742. This celebrated minister

practically ruled the country for twenty-one years, from 1721 to 1742, during which period England, through him, preserved peace with foreign powers; and such wars as arose on the Continent were shorter and less destructive than they would otherwise have been. But in 1741 the temper of the country had become so warlike that a peace policy was no longer practicable; and Walpole was forced to succumb. The administration which succeeded, in which the leading spirit was that fine scholar and high-minded nobleman, Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville), engaged in the Austrian succession war on the side of Maria Theresa. England played no very distinguished part in this war, the success at Dettingen (1743) being more than counterbalanced by the reverse at Fontenoy two years later. The intrigues of the Pelhams drove Lord Granville from office in 1744; and the Duke of Newcastle, with his brother Mr. Pelham, formed, with the aid of the leaders of the opposition, what was called the "Broad-bottom" ministry. Newcastle — a man of small ability, but strong in his extensive parliamentary influence — remained prime minister for twelve years. In 1745 occurred the insurrection of the Highland clans in favor of the Prince Charles Edward, grandson of James II. After defeating the royal troops at Prestonpans, the Prince marched into England, and penetrated as far as Derby. But, meeting with no support, he was compelled to retreat; and in the following year his followers were totally routed by the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden. The Continental war was terminated by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. At the breaking-out of the Seven Years' War in 1756, in which England was allied with Frederick of Prussia against France and Russia, the Duke of Newcastle's incapacity caused every thing to miscarry. Minorca was lost; and the

Duke of Cumberland capitulated, with his whole army, to the French, at Closter-seven. Pitt, the great commoner, the honest statesman, the terrible and resistless orator, had to be admitted, though sorely against the king's will, to a seat in the cabinet. The force of his genius, and the contagion of his enthusiasm, effected a marvellous change; and the memorable year 1759 witnessed the triumph of the allies at Minden, the victory of Wolfe on the Heights of Abraham, which led to the conquest of Canada, and the defeat of the French fleet by Hawke off Belleisle.

Pitt had to resign in 1761, making way for the king's favorite, Lord Bute, who concluded the treaty of Fontainebleau at the end of 1762, by which Canada, Cape Breton, part of Louisiana, Florida, the Senegal, and Minorca were ceded to Britain. For the next twelve years England was universally regarded as the most powerful and successful nation in Europe. But the war had been frightfully expensive; and Mr. Grenville, who was prime minister from 1763 to 1765, conceived in an unlucky hour the idea that a revenue could be raised from America by taxes laid on the colonies by the authority of parliament. The repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 delayed the bursting of the storm; but fresh attempts at taxation being made, and resisted by the people of Boston, the war of independence broke out in the year 1775, and through the help of France, which allied itself with the new Republic in 1778, resulted in the recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the United States in 1783. Lord Chatham, who had all along condemned the awkward and irritating measures of coercion employed by the ministry, vainly opposed, in his memorable dying speech in the House of Lords, "the dismemberment of this ancient monarchy."

The administration which conducted the American war was presided over by the Tory premier, Lord North, who governed the country for twelve years, from 1770 to 1782. Up to the former date the powers of government had, ever since 1688, been exercised, with the exception of a few brief intervals, by the great Whig families, — the Russells, Pelhams, Fitzroys, Bentincks, &c. (together with the commoners whom they selected to assist them), — who prided themselves on having brought about the Revolution. It cannot be denied that on the whole this junto governed with great vigor and success, and that the English aristocracy never showed itself to greater advantage. With the advent of Lord North to power, all was changed. Great questions were handled by little men; and the preponderance of intellectual power remained always on the side of the opposition, which numbered Fox, Burke, Barrè, Dunning, and Sheridan in its ranks. At length, in 1782, Lord North was driven from the helm; and after the brief administrations of the Marquis of Rockingham and Lord Shelburne, and that which resulted from the coalition of Fox with Lord North, the younger Pitt came into power at the end of 1783, and commenced his long and eventful career as prime minister. His policy was at first purely Whig and constitutional, like that of his father; but, after 1789, the attitude which he was compelled to take in relation to the extreme or revolutionary liberalism of France gradually changed the position of his government to such an extent as to make it essentially Tory, as being supported by the Tory party in parliament and in the country. Pitt, however, remained personally a sincere and consistent Liberal to the last.

General Characteristics: Pope and Johnson, Poetry from 1700 to 1745, Pope, Addison, Gay, Parnell, Swift, Thomson, Prior, Garth, Blackmore, Defoe, Tickell, Savage, Dyer, A. Philips, J. Philips, Watts, Ramsay.

The eighteenth century was a period of repose and stability in England's political history. Saved by her insular position from the desolating wars which ravaged the Continent, and acquiescing in the compromise between theoretical liberty and prescriptive right established at the Revolution of 1688, the nation enjoyed during the whole of the period, except in the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745, profound internal peace. Then was the time, it might have been imagined, for the fructification, under the most favorable circumstances, of whatever germs of thought the philosophy and poetry of preceding ages had implanted in the English mind, in the noblest and purest forms of literature and art.

Such, however, was far from being the case. The literature of the eighteenth century, though occupying a large space to our eyes at the present day, from the proximity of the time, and the want of other thinkers who have taken up the ground more satisfactorily, is for the most part essentially of the fugitive sort, and will probably be considered in future ages as not having treated with true appreciation one single subject which it has handled. To speculate upon the cause of this inferiority, does not lie within the scope of the present work: we have simply to note the fact.

The rising of the clans in 1745 divides our period into two nearly equal portions, of the first of which Pope may be taken as the representative author; of the second, Johnson.

Alexander Pope was born at the house of his father, a linen-merchant, residing in Lombard Street, London,

in the year 1688. A sojourn at Lisbon had led to the father's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith; and young Pope was brought up, so far as circumstances would allow, in the rigid belief and practice of his father's creed. His religion excluded him from the public schools and universities of England; his education was therefore private, and not, it would appear, of the best kind. Such as it was, it was not continued long; so that Pope may be considered as eminently a self-taught man, — a self-cultivated poet. His poetic gift manifested itself early: —

> "As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

The classical poets soon became his chief study and delight; and he valued the moderns in proportion as they had drunk more or less deeply of the classical spirit. The genius of the Gothic or Romantic ages inspired him at this time with no admiration whatever; so that in the retrospect of the poetical and critical masterpieces of past times, which concluded the third book of "The Essay on Criticism," he can find no bright spot in the thick intellectual darkness, from the downfall of the Western Empire to the age of Leo X. The only native writers whom he deigns to mention are — Roscommon and Walsh! To the author of "The Essay on Translated Verse" he was, indeed, largely indebted, not only for the general conception of "The Essay on Criticism," but even for some of the best expressions in it.[1] Walsh too, who was a man of fortune, was his patron

[1] Roscommon has, speaking of Dryden —

> "And with a *brave disorder* shows his art."

Pope follows with, —

> "From vulgar bounds with *brave disorder* part."

and kind entertainer; and gratitude led Pope to do him, as a poet, a little more than justice. But, in spite of minor blemishes, one cannot be blind to the transcendent merits of this production, which, taken as the composition of a youth of twenty or twenty-one, is an intellectual and rhythmical achievement perhaps unparalleled.

In a memorable passage, containing not a few illustrious names, Pope has told us how he came to publish: —

> "But why, then, publish? Granville the polite,
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
> Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise;
> And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my lays;
> The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;
> E'en mitred Rochester would nod the head;
> And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
> With open arms received one poet more." [1]

Dryden he had just seen, and no more ("*Virgilium tantum vidi*" is his expression), in the last year of the old poet's life, he being then a boy of twelve. He knew Wycherley the dramatist, then a somewhat battered, worn-out relic of the gay reign of Charles II., and wrote an excellent letter on the occasion of his death in 1716. His relations to Addison were characteristic on both sides. Steele introduced them to each other in 1712. Several trifling circumstances which occurred in the three following years conspired to create an unpleas-

Again, Roscommon has, —

> "Then make the proper use of each extreme,
> And write with fury, but correct with phlegm."

Of this Pope's lines are but the echo, —

> "Our critics take a contrary extreme:
> They judge with fury, but correct with phlegm."

[1] "Imitations of Horace."

ant state of feeling between them, which was brought to a climax in 1715, by the encouragement given by Addison to his friend Tickell in his project of a rival translation of Homer. Pope's version and that by Tickell came out nearly together; and nothing can be clearer than the great superiority of the former. Yet Addison (one cannot but fear, out of jealousy), while praising both translations, pronounced that Tickell's "had more of Homer." This was the occasion of Pope's writing that wonderful piece of satire which will be found at a subsequent page.[1] Addison made no direct reply; but a few months later he, in a paper published in "The Freeholder," spoke in terms of high praise of Pope's translation. The poet's susceptible nature was touched by this generosity; and he, in his turn, immortalized Addison in his fifth satire:—

> "And in our days (excuse some courtly stains)
> No whiter page than Addison remains;
> He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
> And sets the passions on the side of truth;
> Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
> And pours each human virtue in the heart."

Far more close and cordial were the relations between Pope and Swift. Their acquaintance began at the time of Swift's residence in London, between 1710 and 1713. The famous dean was twenty-one years older than Pope; but there must have been a strong inherent sympathy between their characters, for they became fast friends at once, and continued so until Swift's mind broke down. Each had all the tastes of the author and man of letters; each was audacious and satirical; each saw through and despised the hollowness of society, though in their different ways each strove to raise himself in it. Swift's ambition was for power; he wished

[1] See p. 411.

that his literary successes should serve merely as a basis and vantage-ground whence to scale the high places of the state: Pope's ambition was purely for fame; and he regarded literary success not as a means, but as an end. It certainly shows some real elevation of soul in both, that two men, each so irritable, and whose very points of resemblance might have made it easier for them to come into collision, should have remained steady friends for twenty-five years. The utter absence of jealousy in both will perhaps account for the fact. Soon after they became acquainted, Swift was able to do Pope a great service. In 1713 the prospectus of the translation of the "Iliad" appeared; and Swift, who was at that time a real power in London society, used his opportunities to get the subscription-list well filled. Chiefly by his exertions, the list became such a long one, that the proceeds amounted to a small fortune for Pope, and set him at ease on the score of money matters for the remainder of his life. His labors in connection with the translation of Homer extended from 1713 to 1725. He employed in translating "The Odyssey" the services of two minor poets, Fenton and Broome, so that only one-half of the version is from his own hand. "The Pastorals,"[1] "Windsor Forest,"[2] and "The Rape of the Lock"[3] appeared in the years 1704, 1713, and 1714 respectively.

In 1725 Pope published an edition of Shakspeare. His preface shows a juster appreciation of the great dramatist than was then common; yet his own taste pointed too decidedly to the French and classical school to admit of his doing full justice to the chief of the romantic. He was the first to amend two or three corrupt readings by slight and happy alterations, which have since been generally adopted. Such is the substi-

[1] See p. 422. [2] See p. 425. [3] See p. 370.

tution of "south" for the old reading "sound," in the lines in "Twelfth Night," —

> "Oh! it came o'er mine ear like the sweet *south*
> That breathes over a bank of violets," —

and of "strides" for "sides" ("and Tarquin's ravishing *strides*"), in "Macbeth."

The first three books of the "Dunciad," which was dedicated to Swift, appeared anonymously in 1728. In it the poet revenges himself on a number of obscure poets and feeble critics, who had — though not without provocation — attacked and libelled him. The very obscurity of these individuals detracts much from the permanent interest of the satire. The persons and parties introduced by Dryden in his "Absalom and Achitophel" occupied elevated situations upon the public stage; and, as the satire itself is conceived and composed in a corresponding strain of elevation, it is probable, that, so long as English history interests us, that satire will be read. But the Cookes, Curlls, Concanens, and other personages of the "Dunciad," are to us simple names which suggest no ideas; and even the intellectual mastery of the author, great though it be, is hardly so evident to us as the frantic vindictiveness which strains every nerve to say the most wounding and humiliating things.

The famous "Essay on Man"[1] appeared anonymously in 1732. It was the fruit of Pope's familiar intercourse with the sceptic Lord Bolingbroke, and reflects in the popular literature the opinions of a philosophical school presently to be noticed. No poem in the language contains a greater number of single lines which have passed

[1] See p. 400.

into proverbs.[1] The various satirical pieces known as "The Moral Essays" and "The Imitations of Horace,"[2] with prologue and epilogue, were published between the years 1731 and 1738. A fourth book was added to the "Dunciad"[3] in 1742; and the whole poem was re-cast, so as to assign the distinction of king of the dunces to Colley Cibber, the poet-laureate, instead of Theobald. Pope died in May, 1744.

Politically, Pope occupied through life a position of much dignity. Both Halifax and Secretary Craggs desired to pension him, but he declined their offers. Thanks to Homer, he could say truly, —

> "I live and thrive,
> Indebted to no prince or peer alive."

His neutral position is again indicated in the lines, —

> "In moderation placing all my glory,
> While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory."

But in principle it is clear that he infinitely preferred the politics of Locke to those of Filmer. This is proved by such lines as, —

> "For sure, if Dulness sees a grateful day,
> 'Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.
> . . . . . .
> May you, my Cam and Isis, preach it long:
> 'The right divine of kings to govern wrong.'"

[1] For example: —

> "A mighty maze, but not without a plan."
> "The proper study of mankind is man."
> "The enormous faith of many made for one."
> "Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow:
> The rest is all but leather or prunella."
> "An honest man's the noblest work of God."
> "Damned to everlasting fame."
> "But looks through Nature up to Nature's God."
> "From grave to gay, from lively to severe," &c.

[2] See pp. 409, 410. [3] See p. 234.

On the other hand, some of his dearest and most intimate friends, as Swift and Bolingbroke, were Tories.

In religious belief, Pope was of course professedly a Roman Catholic; but there is scarcely a page of his poetry in which the leaven of that scepticism which pervaded the society in which he moved may not be traced. At the court of the Prince of Wales, at Richmond, where Pope was a frequent and welcome guest, free-thinking was in favor, and Tindal, the deist, was zealously patronized: —

> "But art thou one whom new opinions sway,
> One who believes where Tindal leads the way?"

The religious indifferentism which Pope assumed had undoubtedly many conveniences, in an age when serious and *bonâ fide* Romanism was repressed by every kind of vexatious penal disability, and the literary circle in which he lived was composed exclusive of Protestants or unbelievers. He styled himself, —

> "Papist or Protestant, or both between,
> Like good Erasmus, in an honest mean."

Perhaps, too, it may be said, that, independently of external influences, his own highly intellectualized nature predisposed him to set reason above faith, to value thinkers more than saints. But he would not let himself be driven or persuaded into any act of formal apostasy. When, upon the death of his father in 1717, his friend Bishop Atterbury hinted that he was now free to consult his worldly interests by joining the Established Church, Pope absolutely rejected the proposal; upon singular and chiefly personal grounds, it is true, but so decidedly as to make it impossible that the advice should be repeated. As he grew older, Pope's sympathies with the free-thinking school, at least with

the rank and file of their writers, seem to have declined. Very disrespectful mention is made of them in the "Dunciad." Their spokesman is thus introduced in the fourth book: —

> "'Be that my task,' replies a gloomy clerk,
> Sworn foe to mystery, yet divinely dark;
> Whose pious hope aspires to see the day
> When moral evidence shall quite decay,
> And damns implicit faith and holy lies,
> Prompt to impose, and fond to dogmatize."

Finally, whatever may have been the aberrations of his life, its closing scene was one of faith and pious resignation. The priest who administered to him the last sacraments "came out from the dying man, . . . penetrated to the last degree with the state of mind in which he found his penitent, resigned, and wrapt up in the love of God and man."[1] Bolingbroke, like the friends of Béranger on a like occasion, is said to have flown into a great fit of passion at hearing of the priest being called in.

The reign of Anne was considered in the last century to be the Augustan age of English literature; nor, when we remember the great number of poets who then flourished, the high patronage which many of them received, and the extent to which literary tastes then pervaded the upper ranks of society, shall we pronounce the term altogether misplaced. At any rate, by contrast to the middle period of the century, its opening was bright indeed. Johnson, in the Life of Prior, observes, "Every thing has its day. Through the reigns of William and Anne, no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry. In the last war [the seven years' war], when France was disgraced and overpowered in every quarter of the globe, when Spain,

[1] Carruthers' Life of Pope.

coming to her assistance, only shared her calamities, and the name of an Englishman was reverenced through Europe, no poet was heard midst the general acclamation; the fame of our councillors and heroes was intrusted to the gazetteer." The genius of Chatham, the heroism of Wolfe, are unsung to this day.

Addison, the son of a Westmoreland clergyman, was singled out, while yet at Oxford, as a fit object for Government patronage, and sent to travel with a pension. In that learned but then disloyal university, a sincere and clever Whig was a phenomenon so rare, that the Whig ministry seem to have thought they could not do too much to encourage the growth of the species. While on the Continent, Addison produced several heroic poems in praise of King William, written in the heroic couplet, in which Dryden had achieved so much. In 1704 he celebrated in "The Campaign"[1] the battle of Blenheim. For this he was rewarded with the post of Commissioner of Appeals. His well-known hymns,—"The spacious firmament on high," and "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," — though the imagery is unreal, have yet a certain mingled sweetness and force about them, which will not let them be easily forgotten. His dramatic and prose works will be noticed presently.

The poet Gay was also dependent on patrons; but they were in his case private noblemen, not ministers of state. This kindly-natured man, whom Pope describes as —

"In wit a man, simplicity a child,"

belonged to the race of careless, thoughtless poets, described by Horace, who are ill fitted to battle with the world. But the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry took him into their house during the latter years of his

[1] See p. 368.

life, and managed his affairs for him, thus relieving him from the embarrassments which beset him. He died at the early age of forty-four.

Gay is the author of "Rural Sports," a poem in heroic metre, answering to the description of the "lesser epic;" of "The Fan," a mock-heroic poem in three books, evidently suggested by Pope's "Rape of the Lock;" of the "Shepherd's Week," a burlesque upon the "Pastorals" of Ambrose Philips; and of "Trivia," a sort of humorous didactic poem on the art of walking the streets of London. None of these poems rise above mediocrity, though each presents certain points of interest. It is in right of his inimitable songs and ballads that Gay's name still lives and will live. Among these are "All in the Downs," "'Twas when the Seas were roaring," the gloriously-absurd ballad of "Molly Mog," a story of a Quaker's courtship, called "The Espousal," "Newgate's Garland," and others. His well-known "Fables" are neatly and flowingly turned, and that is all.[1]

Parnell is now only remembered as the author of "The Hermit."[2] He was the friend of Harley, Earl of Oxford, to whom Pope sent the edition of his poems, of which he superintended the publication after his death, recommending them to the fallen statesman in a few graceful lines, musical but weighty, such as Pope alone could write.

Swift, to whom Pope dedicated the "Dunciad" in the well-known lines, —

> "Oh! thou, whatever title please thine ear,
> Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver;
> Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
> Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy-chair;
> Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
> Or thy grieved country's copper chains unbind," —

was a copious writer in verse no less than in prose. His poems extend to nearly twice the length of those of Thomson, and consist of odes, epistles, epigrams, songs, satires, and epitaphs.

[1] See p. 391. [2] See p. 384.

Of Swift's poetry he has himself taken care that much should not be said in praise. A man of his powers could have written a great satire or didactic poem which would have delighted the world. But he loathed the world, and therefore did not wish to delight it; and, because the general taste of the age was in favor of the serious character and dignified movement of heroic verse, he carefully avoided that metre, and wrote nearly all his poetry in jingling, careless octosyllabics. Most of his poems, which are very numerous, are essentially of a fugitive character. Many short epigrammatic things were written with a diamond ring on inn-windows, a practice of which he was very fond. Many take the forms of sallies and rejoinders, passing to and fro between the dean and one or other of his lively Dublin friends. Many are addressed to Stella,[1] or written in her honor. One of the longest, "Cadenus and Vanessa," was addressed to Esther Vanhomrigh, the lady whose intellectual education was directed by Swift, and who conceived an ardent passion for him, which he described, while he checked, in this poem. The disappointment of her hopes, added to the discovery of his private marriage to Stella, brought poor Vanessa to her grave. A long and unclouded friendship subsisted between Swift and Pope; they corresponded regularly, and their letters have been published.

James Thomson, the author of "The Seasons,"[2] was the son of a Scotch Presbyterian minister. Showing a bias to literature, he was advised to repair to the great stage of London, "a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it."[3] The proceeds of the sale of "Winter" were all that he had to depend upon for some time after his arrival in the metropolis. By degrees he acquired a reputation, and a fair share of patronage, from which only his invincible laziness prevented him from reaping greater benefit. Pope countenanced his tragedy of "Agamemnon" by coming to it the first night, and expressed his

[1] The real name of Stella was Hester Johnson; this lady lived in Swift's house for twenty-eight years, but is said, even after her marriage to him in 1716, never to have seen him except before a third person.

[2] See p. 425.] [3] Johnson.

personal regard for him in a poetical epistle. Besides "The Seasons," he wrote "Liberty," a tedious, high-flown production, which no one read, even at its first appearance; "Britannia," an attack on Sir Robert Walpole's government; and "The Castle of Indolence."[1] After Walpole's downfall, he obtained a sinecure place through the influence of his friend Lyttleton, but did not long enjoy it, dying, after a short illness, in 1748.

Matthew Prior, a native of Dorsetshire, from an obscure origin rose to considerable eminence, both literary and political. In early life he was a Whig, and first came into notice as the author, jointly with Charles Montague, of "The City Mouse and Country Mouse." In 1701 he ratted to the Tories, and made himself so useful to the party as to be selected to manage several delicate negotiations with foreign powers, in particular that which resulted in the Treaty of Utrecht. His behavior on this occasion exposed him, though it would appear unjustly, to heavy charges from the Whig ministry which came into power in 1714; and he was thrown into prison, and kept there for more than two years. His old associates probably considered him as a renegade, and dealt out to him an unusual measure of severity.

There is much that is sprightly and pointed in Prior's loyal odes, which he designed to rival those which Boileau was composing at the same time in honor of the Grand Monarque, Louis XIV. But it is in his epigrams and "verses of society" that Prior is most successful. How charmingly, for instance, has he turned the stanzas in which he describes his doubtful cure by Dr. Radcliffe, or those upon a lady refusing to continue a dispute with him, or the lines upon "The Lady's Looking-Glass"! How manly, English, and sensible is the advice to a jealous husband in "The Padlock," not to immure his wife or set spies over her, as they did abroad, but give her free liberty

[1] See p. 390.

to range over this wretched world and see how hollow and false it is! This poem ends with some far-famed lines, —

> "Be to her faults a little blind,
> Be to her virtues very kind;
> Let all her ways be unconfined,
> And clap your padlock — on her mind."

In his longer poems Prior was less successful. His "Henry and Emma," an amplified re-cast of the old ballad of "The Nut-browne Mayde," is admirably versified, and contains at least one line which is a part of our current sententious or proverbial speech: —

> "That air and harmony of shape express,
> *Fine by degrees and beautifully less;*"

but most people would prefer to its artificial strains the greater brevity, directness, and distinctness of the old ballad. But the immense service which Dryden had rendered to English poetry, in imparting to the heroic couplet a smooth rapidity, as well as an air of lofty audacity, which it had not known before, is noticeable in all the best heroics of Prior and Addison. "Alma," or "The Progress of the Mind," in three cantos, is a satirical account, in Hudibrastic verse, of the vagaries with which the mind, at different periods of life, and acting through, or controlled by, different parts of the animal economy, troubles her possessor. There is something cynical, and tending to materialism, in the tone of this poem, which was written towards the close of Prior's life. His last and most ambitious effort was "Solomon," a didactic poem in three parts. It is a soliloquy, and represents the royal sage as searching by turns through every province, and to the utmost bounds of knowledge, pleasure, and power, and finding in the end that all was "vanity and vexation of spirit."

Of "well-natured Garth," author of the mock-heroic poem, "The Dispensary," the idea of which he took from Boileau's "Lutrin," we can only say that he was a physician, and a stanch adherent to revolution principles during the reign of Anne; for which he was rewarded with a due share of professional emolument, when his party came into power in 1714. He was an original member of the Kit-cat Club, "generally mentioned as a set of wits; in reality, the patriots that saved Britain."[1]

[1] Horace Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting.

"The Dispensary" is about a bitter quarrel which broke out in the year 1687, between the College of Physicians and the apothecaries, concerning the erection of a dispensary in London. Perhaps the subject is somewhat dull; granting, however, that the conception was a good one, the execution lags considerably behind it: as a whole, the poem is heavy, and far too long.

Sir Richard Blackmore was another patriotic poet. He was the city physician, and was knighted by King William.

Blackmore has met, chiefly from his own faults, with harder measure than he deserves. The sarcasms of Pope and Dryden raise the impression that Blackmore can never have written any thing but what was lumbering, inane, and in the worst possible taste. Yet let any one, without prejudice, take up "The Creation," and read a couple of hundred lines, and he will probably own that it is a very different sort of poem from what he had expected. It is by no means dull, or heavy, or soporific: the lines spin along with great fluency and animation, though not exactly sparkling as they go. The plan is thoroughly conceived and digested, and the argument ably and lucidly, if not always cogently, sustained. But Blackmore was ruined, as a literary man, by his enormous self-confidence and utter want of measure or judgment. He attacked, with indiscriminating fury, the atheists, free-thinkers, wits, and critics of his day, as if these names were interchangeable; and naturally he met with no mercy from the two last. The characters of stanch Whig and somewhat narrow pietist are blended in him in the oddest manner. His lack of judgment is illustrated by his continuing to write and publish epic poems ("Eliza," "Alfred," "Prince Arthur," &c.), long after the world had ceased to read them. Yet it would be unjust to judge by these of "The Creation" (1712), respecting which Addison's eulogy,[1] though it gives all the lights without the shadows, is not so entirely extravagant as it seems at first reading.

Defoe must be named in this connection, on account of his once famous satire, "The True-born Englishman." His motive for writing it was the indignation which he felt at what he called English ingratitude, as showing itself in the attacks continually made on William and his Dutch guards as *foreigners*, and in the peevish, discontented air which most Englishmen wore after so great a deliverance. The composition is of a very coarse kind; and the satire stands to those of Dryden in about the same relation as "The Morn-

[1] "The Spectator," No. 339.

ing Advertiser," the organ of the publicans, does to "The Times." The strange opening is well known: —

> "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil always builds a chapel there;
> And 'twill be found upon examination,
> The latter has the largest congregation."

This must be understood as ironical; for Defoe was himself a Dissenter.

Thomas Tickell resided for many years at Oxford, being a fellow of Queen's College. Although a Whig, and an adherent of Addison, he is the author of some spasmodic stanzas, worthy of the most uncompromising upholder of the divine right of kings, entitled "Thoughts occasioned by a Picture of the Trial of Charles I.," in which lines such as the following occur: —

> "Such boding thoughts did guilty conscience dart,
> A pledge of hell to dying Cromwell's heart."

Tickell's version of the first book of the Iliad will be noticed when we come to speak of the complete translation by Pope. Among his other poems, which are not numerous, I find only two worth naming, — the ballad of "Colin and Lucy," and the memorial lines upon Addison. The ballad is pretty, but the story improbable. Colin having jilted Lucy, she dies of a broken heart; the coffin containing her remains meets the marriage procession; the faithless Colin is struck with remorse, and dies immediately; they occupy the same grave. Do not these lines sound like an echo from our nurseries? —

> "I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> Which says I must not stay;
> I see a hand you cannot see,
> Which beckons me away."

The unhappy history of Richard Savage has been detailed at length by Dr. Johnson, in one of the longest and most masterly of his poetical biographies.[1] His life and character were blighted by the circumstances of his birth and rearing. To these he refers only too plainly and pointedly in his poem of "The Bastard," a very forcible piece of writing, containing a line often quoted: —

> "He lives to build, not boast, a generous race;
> No tenth transmitter of a foolish face."

[1] Lives of the Poets.

His principal work was "The Wanderer," a moral or didactic poem in five cantos (1729), containing many materials and rudiments of thought, half worked up as it were, which one recognizes again transformed after passing through the fiery crucible of a great mind, in Pope's "Essay on Man." Savage, like most of the English poets of the eighteenth century, employed the heroic metre for the majority of his compositions, dazzled by the glory and success with which Dryden and Pope had employed it.

John Dyer, who after failing as a painter became a clergyman late in life, is, or was, known as the author of "Grongar Hill" (1727) and "The Fleece" (1757). The latter is in blank verse, and totally worthless; the former, however, is a pretty poem of description and reflection, breathing that intoxicating sense of natural beauty which never fails to awaken in us some sympathy, and an answering feeling of reality. These lines may serve as a specimen: —

"Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view? —
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys warm and low,
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky;
The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,
The naked rock, the shady bower,
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.

Ambrose Philips, a Cambridge man and a zealous Whig, became a hack writer in London. His "Six Pastorals" are rubbish; nevertheless they were dogmatically praised, probably on party grounds, by Steele in "The Guardian." This was in the year 1713. Pope, who some years before had published pastorals that were really worth something, but had attracted scarcely any notice, in a later "Guardian," No. 40, ironically continued in the same tone, but by instituting a regular comparison between his own pastorals and those of Philips exposed effectually the silliness and emptiness of the latter. Philips, when he had discovered the cheat, was exceedingly angry, and is said to have hung up a rod at Button's (the club frequented by Addison), with which he threatened to chastise Pope. Thereby he but increased his punishment; for Pope not only got Gay to write the burlesque mentioned above, in ridicule of the "Six Pastorals," but affixed to his enemy the nickname of "Namby-pamby Philips," which is too just and appropriate ever to be forgotten while Philips himself is remembered.

John Philips wrote "The Splendid Shilling," a mock-heroic poem in blank verse, in which the design of parodying the "Paradise Lost" is apparent. "Cider" and "Blenheim" are also in blank verse, a preference due to the author's serious admiration of the English epic. In fact, he seems to have been the earliest genuine *literary* admirer of Milton.

Isaac Watts, educated as a Dissenter, was employed for some years as an Independent minister; but his health failed, and he was received into the house of a generous friend, Sir Thomas Abney of Stoke Newington, where he spent the last thirty-six years of his life. He is the author of three books of "Lyric Poems" or "Horæ Lyricæ," mostly of a devotional and serious cast, though the friend of the Revolution and Hanoverian succession comes out strongly here and there, and of "Divine Songs" for children. His "Hymns and Spiritual Songs" are the well-known "Watts's Hymns."

Allan Ramsay, of Scotch extraction on his father's, of English on his mother's side, settled in Edinburgh as a wig-maker about the year 1710. He joined a society of wits and literary *dilettanti*, called the Easy Club; and many of his poems were composed to enliven their social gatherings. The work on which his reputation rests, "The Gentle Shepherd," is a story of real country life in Scotland, in the form of a rhyming pastoral drama. The dialect is the Lowland Scotch, and the sentiments natural and suitable to the persons represented; the story is clearly told, and pleasing in itself: in short, there is nothing to find fault with in the poem; the only thing wanting is that life-giving touch of genius, which, present alike in the artificial pastorals of Pope and the artless songs of Burns, forbids true poetry to die.

The Drama, 1700–1745: Addison, Rowe, Thomson, Young, Southern, Steele. — Prose Comedy: Farquhar, Vanbrugh, Cibber, Centlivre, "The Beggars' Opera."

Since the appearance of Congreve's "Mourning Bride," a tragedy of the old school, no tragic work had been produced, deserving of mention, up to the year 1713. By that time the classic drama of France, the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine, had become thoroughly known and appreciated in England; and, in the absence of any native writers of great original power, it was natural that our dramatists, both in tragedy and comedy, should model their plays upon the French pattern. This is the case with Addison's cele-

brated tragedy of "Cato."[1] It was conceived and partly written, according to Cibber,[2] in the year 1703; but Addison had laid it aside, and only brought it on the stage in 1713, at the urgent request of his political associates. "Cato" is in form a strictly classic play; the unities are observed, and all admixture of comic matter is avoided, as carefully as in any play of Racine's. The brilliant prologue was written by Pope. The play met with signal success, because it was applauded by both political parties; the Whigs cheering the frequent allusions to liberty and patriotism, the Tories echoing back the cheers, because they did not choose to be thought more friendly to tyranny than their opponents.

Rowe produced several tolerable tragedies, one of which, "The Fair Penitent," is a re-cast of Massinger's "Fatal Dowry." His "Jane Shore" is an attempt to write a tragedy in the manner of Shakspeare. Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," wrote the tragedy of "Sophonisba,"[3] in the style of "Cato." The success of this play is said to have been marred by a ridiculous circumstance. There is an absurdly flat line, —

"O Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!"

at the recital of which, a wag in the pit called out, —

"O Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, O!"

The parody was for some days in every one's mouth, and made the continued representation of the play impossible. Young, the author of the "Night Thoughts," wrote several tragedies, among which "Revenge," produced in 1721, still keeps possession of the stage.

[1] See p. 366. [2] Cibber's Apology.

[3] Thomson also wrote the tragedies of Agamemnon (1738), and Tancred and Sigismunda (1745).

Southern, an Irishman, produced, near the beginning of his long career, two tragedies, "The Fatal Secret," and "Oroonoko" (1692), which for many years held their place on the stage. He was notorious for his adroitness in dealing with managers and booksellers; whence he is addressed by Pope as, —

> "Tom, whom Heaven sent down to raise
> The price of prologues and of plays."

He is praised by Hallam for having been the first English writer to speak with abhorrence, in his "Oroonoko," of the slave-trade. However, neither the thoughts nor the style of his tragedies rise above the commonplace.

Steele's comedies of "The Tender Husband," and "The Conscious Lovers" (1772), produced at a long interval of time, achieved a marked success.

"The Comedy of Manners," in prose, of which the first suggestion clearly came from the admirable works of Molière, had been successfully tried, as we have seen, by Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, in the preceding period. To the same school of writers belonged, in this period, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Cibber. Farquhar, a native of Londonderry, is the author of "The Constant Couple," "Sir Harry Wildair," and "The Beaux' Stratagem;" the latter written on the bed of sickness to which neglect and want had brought him, and from which he sank into an untimely grave, in his thirtieth year. Sir John Vanbrugh wrote the famous comedies of "The Provoked Wife," and "The Provoked Husband," the latter being left unfinished at his death, and completed by Cibber. Colley Cibber, a German by extraction, was not only a dramatist, but an actor and theatrical manager. He has left us, in the Apology for his own Life, published in 1740, an amusing account of his own bustling, frivolous life, as well as of the state of the stage from the Restoration down to his own time, adding lifelike sketches of the principal actors and actresses. Mrs. Centlivre produced

a number of comedies[1] in the same period, which commanded a temporary popularity.

In the work of Cibber, just mentioned, there is a complaint that the Continental taste for opera had lately extended to England, to the detriment of the legitimate drama. Gay's "Beggars' Opera" was a clever attempt to gratify this taste by an operatic production truly British in every sense. The subject is the unhappy loves of Capt. Macheath, the chief of a gang of highwaymen, and Polly Peachum, the daughter of a worthy who combines the functions of thief-taker and receiver of stolen goods. The attractiveness of the piece was greatly enhanced by the introduction of a number of beautiful popular airs; indeed, but for these, the coarseness of the plot and the grossness of much of the language would have ere now condemned it, in spite of all its wit and drollery. There is no recitative, as in a modern opera: its place is supplied by colloquial prose. The opera was first produced, with enormous applause, in 1727.

Learning, 1700–1745; Bentley, Lardner.

The greatest of English scholars flourished at the same time with Pope and Swift, and fell under the satire of both. Richard Bentley was a native of Yorkshire, and received his education at Cambridge, where he rose to be master of Trinity College in 1700. The famous controversy between him and Boyle, on the "Epistles of Phalaris," occurred in the last years of the seventeenth century; but we delayed to notice it until we could present a general view of Bentley's literary career. The dispute arose in this way: Sir

[1] The best of these (and a truly excellent comedy it is), is A Bold Stroke for a Wife. As an acting play, The Busey Body has also great merit.

William Temple, taking up the discussion which had been carried on between Boileau and Perrault on the comparative merits of ancient and modern authors, sided with Boileau against the moderns, and, amongst other things, adduced the Epistles of Philaris (which he supposed to be the genuine production of the tyrant of Agrigentum, who roasted Perillus in a brazen bull) as an instance of a work which in its kind was unapproached by any modern writer. Dr. Aldrich, author of the well-known Treatise on Logic, who was then dean of Christ Church, was induced by Temple's praise to determine upon preparing a new edition of the Epistles for the press. He committed this task to young Charles Boyle, great-nephew of the celebrated natural philosopher Robert Boyle. A manuscript in the king's library, of which Bentley was then librarian, had to be consulted. Bentley, though he lent the manuscript, is said to have behaved ungraciously in the matter, and refused sufficient time for its collation. In the preface to his edition of the Epistles, which appeared in 1695, Boyle complained of the alleged discourtesy. Bentley then examined the Epistles carefully; and the result was, that when Wotton, in reply to Temple, published his "Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning," a dissertation was appended to the work, in which Bentley demonstrated that the Epistles could not possibly be the work of Philaris, but were the forgery of a later age. In proving his point, he was lavish of the supercilious and contemptuous language to which his arrogant temper naturally impelled him. Nettled at this sharp attack, the Oxford scholars clubbed their wits and their learning together. Atterbury, Smallridge, and Friend had each a hand in the composition of the reply, which, published still under the name of Boyle, was expected to establish Philaris in the authorship of

the Epistles, and to cover Bentley with confusion. For a long time the great critic was silent; he was supposed to be vanquished, and to feel that he was so. But in 1699 appeared "The Dissertation on the Epistles of Philaris," the finest piece of erudite criticism that has ever proceeded from an English pen. By an analysis of the language of the Epistles, Bentley proved that they were written not in Sicilian, but in Attic, Greek, and that of a period many centuries later than the age of Philaris; while, by bringing to bear his intimate knowledge of the whole range of Greek literature upon various topographical and historical statements which they contained, he demonstrated that towns were named which were not built, and events alluded to which had not occurred, in the lifetime of their reputed author. The controversy was now at an end: his opponents promised a reply, but it was never forthcoming.

Bentley, however, with all his wit and penetration, was without that realizing power of imagination which the greatest German critics of our days, such as the brothers Grimm, have united to the former qualities: he was an acute but not a genial critic. His edition of the "Paradise Lost," published in 1732, is an astonishing production. Pope's lines upon it in the "Dunciad," —

> "Not that I'd tear all beauties from his book,
> Like slashing Bentley, with his desperate hook," —

are not too severe. Among his other works are editions of Horace and Terence, to the latter of which is prefixed a valuable dissertation on the Terentian metres.

Nathaniel Lardner, a dissenting divine, published, between 1730 and 1757, a bulky work, the fruit of great learning and painstaking research, entitled "The Credibility of the Gospel History." Lardner was himself a

Arian; but his book furnished Paley afterwards with the materials for his popular "View of the Evidences of Christianity."

Prose Fiction, Oratory, Pamphlets, Miscellanies, 1700–1745: Swift, Defoe, Steele, Addison.

Under the first head, we have Swift's satirical romance (first published anonymously in 1626), "The Travels of Lemuel Gulliver," including the voyages to Liliput, Brobdignag, Laputa, and the country of the Houyhnhnms. The first sketch of the work occurs in "Martinus Scriblerus," the joint production of Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. But Swift soon took the sole execution of the idea into his own hands; and renouncing personal satire, to which Pope was so much addicted, made this extraordinary work the vehicle for his generalizing contempt and hatred of mankind. This tone of mind, as Scott observes, gains upon the author as he proceeds, until, in the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms, he can only depict his fellow-men under the degrading and disgusting lineaments of the Yahoos. "The True History of Lucian and Rabelais' Voyage of Pantagruel" furnished Swift with a few suggestions; but, in the main, this is a purely original work.

Internal peace and security prolonged through many years, while enormously augmenting the national wealth, occasioned the rise, about the middle of the present period, of that large class of readers to whom so much of modern literature is addressed, — persons having leisure to read, and money to buy books, but who demand from literature rather amusement than instruction, and care less for being excited to think than for being made to enjoy. The stage, especially after Jeremy Collier's attacks upon it, became ever less competent to satisfy the wants of this class, or gratify this new kind of intel-

lectual appetite. The periodical miscellany, the rise of which will be described presently, was the first kind of provision made for this purpose. When Addison and his numerous imitators had written themselves out, and the style had become tiresome, a new and more permanent provision arose in the modern novel. The first of the English novelists was Daniel Defoe, born in 1661. After a long and busy career as a political writer, he was verging on his sixtieth year, when, as a sort of relaxation from his serious labors, he tried his hand at prose fiction. "The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," founded on the true story of Alexander Selkirk, a sailor cast by a shipwreck on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, appeared in 1719. It was followed by "Religious Courtship," "The History of Colonel Jack," "Memoirs of a Cavalier," "Moll Flanders," "Captain Singleton," and several others. It was Defoe's humor to throw the utmost possible air of reality over every one of his fictions, so as to palm it off on the reader as a narrative of facts. Thus the famous physician Dr. Mead is said to have been taken in by the pretended "Journal of the Great Plague," and Lord Chatham to have recommended "The Memoirs of a Cavalier" as the best authentic account of the civil war.

No oratory worthy of notice dates from this period. On the other hand, pamphleteers and political satirists abounded. On the Whig side, Defoe wrote an ironical pamphlet, "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters" (1702), which the House of Commons, then running over with Tory and High Church feeling, voted scandalous and seditious. He was fined, pilloried, and imprisoned. From the same cause several of his other political writings were at the time considered libellous, and exposed him to persecution; to escape which, he, late in life, renounced political discussion, and indemni-

fied himself for being debarred from describing the busy world of fact by creating a new world, in semblance hardly less real, out of his own prolific fancy. On the Tory side, more powerful pens were engaged. No pamphlet ever produced a greater immediate effect than Swift's "Conduct of the Allies," written in 1712, in order to persuade the nation to a peace. "It is boasted, that between November and January eleven thousand were sold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation, certainly, no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furnished arguments for conversation, speeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary resolutions."[1] This was followed by "Reflections on the Barrier Treaty," published later in the same year, and "The Public Spirit of the Whigs," written in answer to Steele's "Crisis," in 1714. "The Examiner" (succeeding Addison's feebler organ, "The Whig Examiner") was commenced by Swift soon after his introduction to Harley, in October, 1710, and continued till about the middle of the next year. In all these productions, Swift, who had commenced life as a Whig, writes with the usual rancor of a political renegade. Differently aimed, but equally effective, were the famous "Drapier's Letters." The following were the circumstances which gave occasion to them: —

Since the Treaty of Limerick in 1691, Ireland had been treated in many respects as a conquered country. This was indeed unreservedly and openly the case, so far as the Roman Catholic population were concerned; but the Irish Protestants also were compelled to share in the national humiliation. When some enterprising men had established, about the year 1700, an Irish woollen manufacture, the commercial jealousies of Eng-

[1] Johnson's Life of Swift.

land were aroused; and an act was passed, which, by prohibiting the exportation of Irish woollens to any other country but England, destroyed the rising industry. This was but one out of a number of oppressive acts under which Irishmen chafed, but in vain. Swift's haughty temper rose against the indignities offered to his country; and he only waited for an opportunity to strike a blow. That opportunity was given by the proceedings connected with Wood's contract for supplying a copper coinage, to circulate only in Ireland. Commercially speaking, it was ultimately proved that the new coinage was calculated to benefit Ireland, not to injure her. The coins were assayed at the mint, under the superintendence of no less a person than Sir Isaac Newton, and proved to be of the proper weight and fineness. But the way in which the thing was done was, and deservedly, the cause of offence. The privilege of coining money, which had always been considered to appertain to the royal prerogative, was in this instance, without the consent or even knowledge of the lord lieutenant or the Irish privy council, delegated to an obscure Englishman, who had obtained the preference over other competitors by paying court to the king's mistress. It was this heaping of insult upon injury which excited the ferment in the Irish mind, of which the memorable Drapier availed himself. The first letter appeared some time in the year 1724. In it and the two following letters Swift artfully confined himself to those objections and accusations which were open to the perceptions of all classes of the people. He declared that the new coins were of base metal; he pulled Wood's character to pieces; he asserted that the inevitable consequence of the introduction of the new coinage would be the disappearance of all the gold and silver from Ireland. Such charges as these came home

to the feelings and understanding of the lowest and most ignorant of his readers; and the excitement which they caused was tremendous. In the fourth and following letters Swift followed up the attack by opening up the general question of the wrongs and humiliations which Ireland had to suffer from England. A proclamation was vainly issued by the Irish Government, offering a reward of three hundred pounds to any one who would disclose the author of the Drapier's fourth letter. The danger was great, but Sir Robert Walpole was equal to the occasion. He first tried a compromise, but without success, and then wisely cancelled the obnoxious contract. From this period to his death, Swift was the idol of the Irish people. He said once to a Protestant dignitary, in the course of an altercation, "If I were but to hold up my little finger, the mob would tear you to pieces."

Arbuthnot, the joint author, with Pope and Swift, of "Martinus Scriblerus," of whom Swift exclaimed, "Oh, if the world had a dozen Arbuthnots, I would burn my [Gulliver's] Travels!" wrote, about the year 1709, the telling political satire named "The History of John Bull," levelled against the Godolphin ministry.

The great war in which Europe was involved was represented by a lawsuit carried on by John Bull against my Lord Strutt (the King of Spain): Nicholas Frog and Esquire South (the Dutch republic and the emperor) being parties to the suit on the one side, — John paying their expenses; and Lewis Baboon (the King of France) on the other. John Bull's attorney, Humphrey Hocus (Duke of Marlborough), contrives so to manage his suit for him as to plunge him in a bottomless gulf of expense. Addison replied with "The Late Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff" (1713), an attack on the Tory ministry for submitting to disadvantageous terms at the peace of Utrecht. But the humor here is not so broad and hearty as in "The History of John Bull," which yet evidently served it for a model.

From this period dates the rise of the periodical miscellany.[1] To Richard Steele, an Irishman, who was employed by the Whig Government to write "The Gazette" during the Spanish succession war, the nature of his employment suggested the design of "The Tatler," a tri-weekly sheet, giving the latest items of news, and following them up with a tale or essay. To this periodical Addison soon began to contribute papers, and continued to write for it nearly to the end. The first number appeared on the 22d April, 1709, the last on the 2d January, 1711. The success of "The Tatler" being decisive, it was followed up by "The Spectator" (1711–12), the plan of which, "as far as it regards the feigned person of the author and of the several persons who compose his club, was projected" by Addison, "in concert with Sir Richard Steele."[2] In the first number, which was from the pen of Addison, the imaginary projector of the undertaking gives a portrait of himself that is full of strokes of delicate humor; how from childhood he had "distinguished himself by a most profound silence," and in mature age lived in the world "rather as a spectator of mankind than as one of the species." He announces his intention of publishing "a sheet full of thoughts" every morning, repudiates political aims, declares that he will preserve a tone and character of rigid impartiality, invites epistolary assistance from the public, and requests that letters may be addressed to "The Spectator" at "Mr. Buckley's in Little Britain." No. 2, by Steele, contains sketches of the different persons composing "The Spectator's"

[1] Usually, but not very correctly, called the periodical essay; a word which can hardly be stretched so as to include the allegories, sketches of manners and characters, tales, gossiping letters, &c., with which the Tatler and Spectator abound.

[2] See the preface to Addison's works, by Tickell.

club (literature supposed itself hardly able to hold its ground in those days without its clubs), — the fine old country gentleman, Sir Roger de Coverly; the retired merchant, Sir Andrew Freeport; Capt. Sentry, the old soldier; Will Honeycomb, the beau; besides a stage-bitten barrister, and a clergyman. There is no doubt that Addison believed himself to be engaged in an important work, tending to humanize and elevate his countrymen. "It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I should be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." [1]

By turning to fresh intellectual fields the minds of the upper classes, — the people in good society, — to whom the theatre was now a forbidden or despised excitement, Addison did without doubt allay much restlessness, still or amuse many feverish longings. The millennium, it seemed, was not to come yet a while; the fifth monarchy was not to be yet established: no, nor was the world to become a great Armida's garden of pleasure and jollity; nor did blind loyalty to the true prince commend itself now even to the heart, much less to the reason. Robbed of its ideals, disenchanted, and in heavy cheer, the English mind, though not profoundly interested, read these pleasant chatty discoursings about things in general, and allowed itself to be amused, and half forgot its spiritual perplexities. Nothing was settled by these papers, nothing really probed to the bottom; but they taught, with much light grace and humor, lessons of good sense, tolerance, and moderation; and their popularity proved that the lesson was relished.

"The Spectator" extended to 635 numbers, including

[1] Spectator, No. 10.

the eighty of the resumed issue in 1714. Upon its suspension in December, 1712, "The Guardian" took its place. "Of the 271 papers in 'The Tatler,' Steele wrote 188, Addison 42, and both conjointly 36. Of 635 'Spectators,' Addison wrote 274, Steele 240; and, of 175 'Guardians,' Steele wrote 82, and Addison 53."[1] Several "Tatlers" were contributed by Swift, and a few "Guardians" by Pope.

Among the subjects treated of in "The Spectator" are the following: masquerades, clubs, operas, vulgar superstitions, ghosts, devotees, the shortness of life (in the famous "Vision of Mirzah," No. 159), and the poetical merits of Milton's "Paradise Lost," in an elaborate criticism, extending over seventeen numbers, written by Addison.

At the end of 1715, Addison commenced writing "The Freeholder," at the rate of two papers a week, and continued it till the middle of the next year. "This was undertaken in the defence of the established government; sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humor was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory fox-hunter."[2]

The daily miscellany passed by insensible degrees into inferior hands, and at last became insufferably dull. From the nature of the case, intellectual gifts are required to recommend this style, with which the novel can dispense. There are ten persons who can write a tale which people will read, for one who can compose a passable criticism, or a *jeu d'esprit*, or seize the fugitive traits of some popular habit, vice, or caprice. Even the importation of politics, as in "The Freeholder," failed to give a permanent animation. So, after the town had been deluged for some time with small witti

[1] Chambers' English Literature, i. 620. [2] Johnson.

cisms and criticisms that had no point or sap in them, the style was agreed on all hands to be a nuisance, and was discontinued. Some years later it was revived by Dr. Johnson, as we shall see.

Works of Satire and Humor: Swift.

It will be remembered[1] that Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, took a leading part in the discussion upon the relative merits of ancient and modern authors. Swift himself struck in on the same side, in the brilliant satire of "The Battle of the Books,"[2] which was written in 1697, but not published till 1704. In this controversy the great wits, both in France and England, were all of one mind in claiming the palm for the ancients. It was, perhaps, with some reference to it that Pope, in the "Essay on Criticism," burst forth into the magnificent encomium in honor of the great poets of antiquity, beginning, —

"Still green with bays each ancient altar stands," &c.

In the re-action towards the mediæval and Gothic antiquity which marked the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, this enthusiasm for Greece and Rome was much abated. At present there are symptoms of a partial revival of the feeling.

"The Tale of a Tub" was also published in 1704, though written in 1696. The title is explained by Swift to mean, that, as sailors throw out a tub to a whale, to keep him amused, and prevent him from running foul of their ship, so, in this treatise, his object is to afford such temporary diversion to the wits and free-thinkers of the day (who drew their arguments from "The Leviathan" of Hobbes) as may restrain them from

[1] See p. 247.

[2] See p. 256.

injuring the state by propagating wild theories in religion and politics. The allegory of the three brothers, and the general character and tendency of this extraordinary book, will be examined in the second part of the present work.[1]

History, 1700–1745: Burnet, Rapin.

Burnet's History of his Own Times, closing with the year 1713, was published soon after his death in 1715. Burnet was a Scotchman, and a very decided Whig. Exiled by James II., he attached himself to the Prince of Orange, and was actively engaged in all the intrigues which paved the way for the Revolution. The History of his Own Times, though ill arranged and inaccurate, is yet, owing to its contemporary character, a valuable original source of information for the period between the Restoration and 1713. Rapin, a French refugee, published in 1725 the best complete history of England that had as yet appeared. It was translated twice, and long remained a standard work.

Of the theology and philosophy of the period, we reserve our sketch till after we have examined the progress of general literature between 1745 and 1800.

Johnson. — Poetry, 1745–1800: Gray, Glover, Akenside, Young, Shenstone, Collins, Mason, Warton, Churchill, Falconer, Chatterton, Beattie, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Darwin, Walcot, Gifford, Bloomfield.

The grand yet grotesque figure of Samuel Johnson holds the central place among the writers of the second half of the eighteenth century. In all literary reunions he took the undisputed lead, by the power and brilliancy of his conversation, which, indeed, as recorded by Boswell, is a more valuable possession than any or all of his published works. His influence upon England was

[1] See p. 464.

eminently conservative; his manly good sense, his moral courage, his wit, readiness, and force as a disputant, were all exerted to keep English society where it was, and prevent the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau from gaining ground. His success was signal. Not that there were wanting on the other side either gifted minds or an impressible audience: Hume, Gibbon, and Priestley were sceptics of no mean order of ability; and Boswell's own example[1] shows, that, had there been no counteracting force at work, an enthusiastic admiration for Rousseau might easily have become fashionable in England. But, while Johnson lived and talked, the revolutionary party could never gain that mastery in the intellectual arena, and that ascendency in society, which it had obtained in France. After his death the writings of Burke carried on the sort of conservative *propaganda* which he had initiated.

Johnson was born at Lichfield, in the year 1709. His father was a native of Derbyshire, but had settled in Lichfield as a bookseller. After having received the rudiments of a classical education at various country schools, he was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford, in the year 1728. His father about this time suffered heavy losses in business, in consequence of which Johnson had to struggle for many years against the deepest poverty. Nor were either his mental or bodily constitution so healthful and vigorous as to compensate for the frowns of fortune. He seems to have inherited from his mother's family the disease of scrofula, or the king's evil, for which he was taken up to London, at the age of three years, to be touched by Queen Anne; the ancient superstition concerning the efficacy of the royal touch not having then wholly died out. His mind was a prey during life to that most mysterious malady,

[1] See Hume's Autobiography.

hypochondria, which exhibited itself in a morbid melancholy, varying at different times in intensity, but never completely shaken off; and also in an incessant haunting fear of insanity. Under the complicated miseries of his condition, religion constantly sustained him, and deserted him not, till at the age of seventy-five, full of years and honors, his much-tried and long-suffering soul was released. In his boyhood, he tells us, he had got into a habit of wandering about the fields on Sundays, reading, instead of going to church; and the religious lessons early taught him by his mother were considerably dimmed; but at Oxford the work of that excellent man, though somewhat cloudy writer, William Law, entitled, "A Serious Call to a Holy Life," fell into his hands, and made so profound an impression upon him, that from that time forward, though he used to lament the shortcomings in his practice, religion was ever, in the main, the actuating principle of his life.

After leaving Oxford, he held a situation as undermaster in a grammar-school for some months; but this was a kind of work for which he was utterly unfitted, and he was compelled to give it up. He went to Birmingham, where he obtained some trifling literary work. In 1735 he married a Mrs. Porter, a widow, and soon after, as a means of subsistence, opened a boarding school, in which, however, he failed. He now resolved to try his fortune in London. He settled there with his wife in 1737, and supported himself for many years by writing; principally by his contributions to "The Gentleman's Magazine," which had been established by Cave about the year 1730, and is still carried on. His Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language was published in 1747. The price stipulated for from the booksellers was £1,575; and the work was to be completed in three years. "The Rambler," a series of

papers on miscellaneous subjects, on the model of "The Spectator," was commenced by him in 1750, and concluded in 1752. This, and various other works which appeared from time to time, joined to his unrivalled excellence as a talker, which made his company eagerly sought after by persons of all ranks, gradually won for Johnson a considerable reputation; and, after the accession of George III., he received, through the kindness of Lord Bute, a pension of three hundred pounds a year. This was in 1762. He continued to reside in London — with but short intervals on the occasions of his tours to the Hebrides, to Wales, and to France — till his death in 1784.

Johnson's works — excepting the Dictionary, a tragedy called "Irene," a few poems, "The Lives of the Poets," [1] some other biographies, and a short novel, the famous "Rasselas" — consist of essays, very multifarious in their scope, discussing questions of politics, manners, trade, agriculture, art, and criticism. The bulk of these were composed for "The Rambler," "The Idler," and "The Adventurer." His prose style, cumbrous, antithetical, and pompous, yet in his hands possessing generally great dignity and strength, and sometimes even, as in "Rasselas," rising to remarkable beauty and nobleness, was so influential upon the men of his day that it caused a complete revolution, for a time, in English style, and by no means for the better; since inferior men, though they could easily appropriate its peculiarities or defects, — its long words, its balanced clauses, its labored antitheses, — could not with equal ease emulate its excellence.

Among Johnson's poems, the satire called "London," an imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, and the beautiful didactic poem on "The Vanity of Human Wishes," are the most deserving of notice.

[1] See p. 492.

Gray, the son of a scrivener in London, was educated, and lived the greater part of his life, at Cambridge. In the small volume of his poems there are several pieces which have gained a permanent place in our literature. "The Bard,"[1] "The Progress of Poesy," and the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," are all, in their different ways, excellent. As a writer he was indolent and fastidious. To the former quality we probably owe it that his writings are so few; to the latter, that many of them are so excellent. The famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" was first published in a magazine in 1750. The melancholy beauty of these lovely lines is enhanced by the severity and purity of the style.

Richard Glover, the son of a London merchant, produced the first edition of his blank-verse epic, "Leonidas," in 1737. It has not much merit, but at the time of its first appearance was extravagantly praised for political and party reasons; since every high-flown sentiment in praise of patriotism, disinterestedness, and love of liberty, was interpreted by the opposition into a damning reflection on the corrupt practices, and the truckling spirit towards foreigners, by which Sir Robert Walpole's government was supposed to be characterized. In its present finished state, as a poem of twelve books, it first came out in 1770. The "Athenaid," a sequel to the "Leonidas," and in the same metre, but extending to thirty books, was published after the author's death in 1785; it is a dull, versified chronicle of the successes gained by the Athenians in the Persian war. The ballad of "Hosier's Ghost" is the only composition of Glover's that is worth remembering.

Mark Akenside was the son of a butcher at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The poem by which he is best known, "The Pleasures of Imagination" (1744), was suggested by a series of papers on the same subject (Nos. 411–421), contributed by Addison to "The Spectator." But the analysis of the pleasurable feelings which are awakened in the mind by whatever excites the imagination, though suitable enough as a subject for an essay, becomes insupportable when carried on through a poem of more than two thousand blank verses. Akenside had no sense of humor and no wit, but was an ardent lover of nature. He may be called a second-rate Wordsworth, whose style that of some of his "Odes" much resembles.

[1] See pp. 436, 492.

The "Night Thoughts" [1] of Young appeared between the years 1742 and 1746. This didactic poem, which has been read and praised beyond its deserts, is in blank verse, and is said to have been inspired by the melancholy into which the poet was plunged by the death of his wife. Moralizing forms the staple of the poem, just as philosophizing forms the staple of Wordsworth's "Excursion," and microscopic description of Crabbe's "Borough;" but tales are inserted here and there by way of episode, just as in the other two poems mentioned. There is a fine, fluent, sermonizing vein about Young; but a flavor of cant hangs about his most ambitious efforts. To use a phrase of the day, he is a sad "Philistine;" and, through the admiration long felt or professed for him, his influence must have much tended to propagate false taste. The work is divided into nine "Nights," the headings of some of which will serve to indicate its general character; they are, "On Life, Death, and Immortality," "Narcissa," "The Christian Triumph," "The Infidel Reclaimed," "Virtue's Apology," &c. A few lines occur here and there, stamped with a terseness and significance which have made them almost, if not quite, proverbial: such are, —

"Procrastination is the thief of time," —

And, —

"Pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps:
And pyramids are pyramids, in vales."

In philosophy, Young was a follower of Berkeley, whose idealism he reproduces at some length in the sixth "Night:" —

"Objects are but the occasion, ours the exploit:
Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,
Which Nature's admirable picture draws,
And beautifies creation's ample dome."

In theology, he leans on Butler, speaking of —

"A scheme analogy pronounced so true, —
Analogy, man's surest guide below."

Young found an ardent admirer, and even in part a translator, in Ganganelli, Pope Clement XIV., a man prone, like himself, to bow before the power and splendor of this world. His "Odes" are worth very little; many of them teem with fulsome praise of George II., and the house of Hanover.

Shenstone, a native of Hales Owen, near Birmingham, not far

[1] The full title is, The Complaint; or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality.

from which lay his beautiful little estate of "The Leasowes," which is still shown to the curious traveller, published his poem of "The Schoolmistress" in the year 1741. It is in the Spenserian stanza, and affects an antique dress of language; but it has really very little merit. Shenstone was a vain and frivolous, yet withal querulous, person; his poems are full of complaints that his estate is too small to admit of his gratifying his refined tastes. Some of his ballads, e.g., "Valentine's Day," and "Jemmy Dawson," have some pretty and pathetic stanzas. The "Pastoral Ballad" is a charming piece of pretty trifling.[1]

Collins, the son of a hatter in Chichester, published his once famous "Odes" in 1746. Nor can these ever be entirely forgotten, so beautiful is the diction, so clear and profound are the thoughts. With some occasional exaggeration and over-luxuriance, this author's language is for the most part exquisitely musical and refined. The odes "To Simplicity," on "The Manners," and on "The Passions," are among those most deserving of notice.

Mason, the friend of Gray, wrote in 1748 a poem called "Isis," containing a petulant attack upon the University of Oxford, as the nursery of Jacobitism and disaffection. This drew forth a brilliant reply, the "Triumph of Isis," from Thomas Warton, then a young student at Trinity College, Oxford, and afterwards distinguished as the historian of English poetry. Mason wrote a number of odes, and also tried his hand at satire in the "Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers," which, however, has more ill-nature than wit. We shall meet with him again as a dramatist.

Churchill, the son of an Essex clergyman, took orders, married, obtained preferment, and appeared to be on the high road to a deanery, when the example of a good-for-nothing schoolfellow,[2] an innate thirst of pleasure, a loose moral frame, and an irritable vanity, turned him aside into the perilous career of the satirist and the wit. He flung off his gown, and after a first unsuccessful attempt with "The Conclave," a satire on the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, obtained at a bound all the notoriety which he desired by the publication of the "Rosciad" (1761). This is a clever personal satire on the actors who then trod the London stage, with many dramatic criticisms not without value. By the sale of this, and of the "Apology for the Rosciad," published soon after, he cleared more than a thousand pounds. This success completely turned his head; he produced poem after poem with great rapidity, endeavoring to rival the satirico-didactic vein of Pope; allied himself closely with the demagogue Wilkes; fell into profligate ways; and died of fever at Boulogne in

[1] See p. 423.

[2] Robert Lloyd, author of The Actor, a poem which had attracted much notice.

1764, bankrupt in health, money, and good name. Among his many poems I shall single out for mention "Night," and "The Prophecy of Famine." The former, dedicated to Lloyd, appeared at the end of 1761: its purpose is to vindicate himself and his friends from the attacks which were levelled against them on the score of irregular life. It is spirited and clever, reminding the reader often of Pope's "Imitations of Horace," but just without that marvellous preternatural element which makes the one an immortal work of genius, the other a brilliant but ephemeral copy of verses. These lines are a good specimen: —

> "What is't to us, if taxes rise or fall?
> Thanks to our fortune, we pay none at all.
> Let muckworms, who in dirty acres deal,
> Lament those hardships which we cannot feel.
> His grace who smarts may bellow if he please;
> But must I bellow too, who sit at ease?
> By custom safe, the poet's numbers flow
> Free as the light and air some years ago;
> No statesman e'er will think it worth his pains
> To tax our labors and excise our brains.
> Burthens like these vile earthly buildings bear:
> No tribute's laid on castles in the air."

In "The Prophecy of Famine," which appeared in 1763, the chief wit lies in his ascribing to the Scotch, against whom the satire is aimed, exactly the opposite virtues to their (supposed) notorious bad qualities. But there is no proper arrangement; one often does not see what he is driving at; he seems to have written away just as things came into his head, without having formed a clear intellectual plan. The goddess of Famine, after the battle of Culloden, is supposed to prophesy to two Scotch shepherd boys, Jockey and Sawney, the elevation of Lord Bute to the premiership, the exaltation of the whole nation consequent thereupon, and their fattening at England's expense.

Falconer, a Scotch sailor, published his descriptive poem of "The Shipwreck," in heroic verse,[1] in 1762. It is too labored and artificial to command permanent popularity. The author was himself lost at sea a few years afterwards.

The publication of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," in 1765, was one of the first symptoms of that great literary and religious re-action from classical to Christian antiquity, the waves of which have since spread so far. *Naïve* old ballads, such as "Chevy Chase"

[1] That is, in ten-syllable lines rhyming in couplets; the standard measure, in English, for most serious compositions.

for instance, which had stirred the blood of Sir Philip Sidney two hundred years before, were resuscitated from their long sleep, and supplied to imaginative youth towards the close of the century a mental food quite different from that on which their fathers and grandfathers had been reared.

Chatterton, "the wondrous boy that perished in his prime," belonged to a family which for several generations had supplied the sexton of the noble church of St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol. In an old muniment room above the north porch, the boy had come across mouldering parchment records connected with the ancient history of the church; and the strange idea seized him of attributing poems of his own composition to an imaginary monk, whom he called Rowley, of the fifteenth century, and pretending that he had found the original manuscripts of these poems in the muniment room. His forgeries met with considerable acceptance in the West of England; but he was foiled in an attempt to palm off some of them upon Horace Walpole. He came up to London in 1770, and, after a vain attempt to support himself by the pen, died there in the course of a few months, while yet in his eighteenth year: according to one account, by taking poison; according to another, of actual starvation. A few years later, a celebrated and keenly contested controversy arose concerning the genuineness of the Rowley poems.

Beattie produced the first canto of his "Minstrel" in 1771. I think that Mr. Craik[1] is unjust to this poem when he says that, in comparison with Thomson's "Castle of Indolence," it is like gilding compared to gold. Beattie had not the same power of luscious delineation, nor the same command over language, which belonged to Thomson; yet, on the other hand, he sometimes rises to a strain of manly force and dignity which was beyond the compass of the other. The metre is the Spenserian stanza. The tone is like that of Gray in the "Elegy:" it is the chord struck by Rousseau, the superiority of simple unbought pleasures to luxury and pomp, of nature to art, &c. The great defect of the poem is its want of plot. The following is one of the finest stanzas: —

> "For know, to man as candidate for heaven,
> The voice of the Eternal said, Be free;
> And this divine prerogative to thee
> Doth virtue, happiness, and heaven convey;
> For virtue is the child of liberty,
> And happiness of virtue; nor can they
> Be free to keep the path, who are not free to stray."

Goldsmith's poems are few in number, but several are of rare merit. More than one recent biography has

[1] History of English Literature, v. 170.

made known the story of the failures, the sorrows, the erratic youth, of this child of genius, who retained his Irish heedlessness, generosity, sensibility, and elasticity to the last moment of his life. His didactic poem, "The Traveller," appeared in 1765, at which time he had long been settled in London, doing miscellaneous literary work for the booksellers. Both the form and the philosophy of this poem (which teaches that the constituents of human happiness vary with climate, place, and circumstance) bespeak strongly the influence of Pope. Great intellectual growth is visible in "The Deserted Village" (1771). We have the same charming type of the village pastor, "passing rich on forty pounds a year," which is presented to us in "The Vicar of Wakefield;" but the poet strikes here a deeper and graver key, when, in lines to which the walls of St. Stephen's have so often re-echoed, he bewails the extension of the English and Irish *latifundia*,[1] and the decay of the peasantry: —

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

All Goldsmith's drollery comes out in the "Elegy on Madame Blaise," and that "On a Mad Dog;" all his wit, rapidity, and luminous discernment, in the "Retaliation," a series of imaginary epitaphs on his chief friends, among whom are included Burke, Garrick, and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Cowper was designed by his father for the bar; but after a time, his unfitness for that profession becoming manifest, he was appointed to a clerkship in the House

[1] The name given to the vast landed estates of the Roman nobles.

of Lords. But an overpowering nervousness prevented him from discharging the duties of the post: he resigned it, and went to live in the country, which he never afterwards left. He formed an intimate friendship with a man of great force of character and fervid piety, the Rev. John Newton, curate of Olney. In the poems of his first volume, published in 1782, this friend's influence is very manifest. These poems consist chiefly of some long didactic compositions of several hundred lines each, in blank verse, entitled, "Table-Talk," "The Progress of Error," "Truth," "Expostulation," "Hope," "Charity," "Conversation," and "Retirement." Their tone is generally despondding, and leaning to the side of censure: he declaims against the novelists and the mischief they cause, indulges in a tirade against the press, and talks of "the freethinkers' brutal roar." Yet there is so much grace and delicacy and lightness of touch, even in most of the censure, and he is so every inch a gentleman everywhere and always, that an affectionate admiration for the writer far predominates over every other feeling. "Tirocinium" appeared in 1784: it is an earnest attack on the public-school system, on the ground of its demoralizing influence on character. There are many vigorous lines, and some cutting satire, as in the line, —

"The parson knows enough who knows a duke."

There is also a beautiful tribute to John Bunyan, whom he will not name, lest a name then generally despised should awaken only derision.

His second volume, containing "The Task," appeared in 1785. This is a didactic or reflective poem, in six books. The poet, having been asked to write a poem on a *sofa*, commences with a sketch of the history of

seats, which he tells with a mild humor, reminding one of the playfulness of a kitten, graceful and pretty, and never vulgar though sometimes trivial. After having come down to the creation of the sofa, fancy bears him away to his school days, when he roved along Thames' bank till tired, and needed no *sofa* when he returned; then he becomes dreamy, traces his life down the stream of time to the present hour, noting what has made him happy, stilled his nerves, strengthened his health, raised his spirits, or kept them at least from sinking; and finds that it has ever been the free communion with nature in the country. Many charming descriptive passages are interwoven in all this. The tale of "Crazy Kate" is admirably told. Then he maunders on about the gypsies; then launches, — if the word is not too vehement, — into a tirade against town life, in which occurs the well-known line, —

"God made the country, and man made the town."

An additional shade of melancholy and despondency is evidently thrown over the poet's mind by the humiliations which England about this time had to brook, — the treaty of Fontainebleau, the loss of America.

Among the smaller poems, the merry history of "John Gilpin" is familiar to every one. "The Negro's Complaint" was written to expose the cruelties of the African slave-trade. The stanzas on "Boadicea" are finely expressed, and with a more *sustained* elevation than is usual with him: for Cowper's *art* is certainly very defective; he seems hardly to have believed that poetry had any rules at all. His versification is careless; and to rhythm and choice of words he pays far too little attention; weak and trivial are continually annexed to weighty lines. This is noticeable even in that admirable poem, "On the Receipt of my Mother's

Picture." Though his vein is usually serious, he has a genuine native humor which can be frolicsome when it pleases. For an example, take some of his lines "On a Mischievous Bull," which the owner sold at the poet's instance : —

"Ah! I could pity thee, exiled
From this secure retreat;
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight:
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess: therefore go, —

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee:
The angry Muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee."

"The Castaway" is exquisite in its mournful pathos; and the "Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk," though in a jingling metre, are full of striking turns of thought which insure to them a permanent popularity. Cowper's last work of any consequence was his translation of the "Iliad," in blank verse; this appeared in 1791.

In Scotland, where no truly original poet had arisen since Dunbar, the last forty years of the century witnessed the bright and brief career of the peasant poet, whose genius shed a dazzling glow over his country's literature. Many beautiful songs,[1] mostly of unknown authorship, circulated in Scotland before the time of Burns; and Allan Ramsay, though an imitator as far as the substance of his poetry was concerned, had so written in the native dialect as to show that original and

[1] For an interesting account of them, see an article by Prof. Shairp in Macmillan's Magazine for May, 1861.

truly national forms lay ready for the Scottish poet. With this foundation to work upon, with the education of a Scottish primary school, a knowledge of Pope and Shenstone, and a sound, clear intellect, Burns made himself the greatest song-writer that our literature has ever known.[1] Force pervaded his whole character: he could do nothing by halves. At the age of eighteen, that passion from which proceeds so much alike of the glory and of the shame of man's existence developed itself in his burning heart, and remained till death the chief motive power of his thoughts and acts. He fell in love; and then his feelings, as he tells us, spontaneously burst forth in song. Two other strongly marked tendencies in his character must be mentioned, to which some of his most famous productions may be attributed. The first was his ardent spirit of nationality; the second, his repugnance to, and revolt from, the narrow sectarianism of his age and country. Almost the first book he ever read was the life of Sir William Wallace the Scottish patriot, whose hiding-places and ambushes, as pointed out by history or local tradition, he visited with a pilgrim's fervor. It was this spirit which produced such poems as —

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."[2]

Or the "Address to the Scottish Members of Parliament." His repugnance to Presbyterianism — exemplified in such poems as "Holy Willie's Prayer," the "Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq.," and the "Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous" — redounds partly to the disgrace of the system which he satirized, and partly to his own. If he rebelled against the ceremonial and formal, he rebelled no less against the *moral* teaching of Presbyterianism. His protest against

[1] See pp. 432, 442. [2] See p. 433.

religious hypocrisy must be taken in connection with his own licentiousness. His father, an earnest adherent of that creed and system which the son broke away from and despised, though wrestling all his life against poverty and misfortune, endured his troubles with patience, and died in peace, because he had learned the secret of the victory over self. His wondrously gifted son never gained that victory; and the record of his last years presents one of the most sad, disastrous spectacles that it is possible to contemplate.

Burns's first volume of poems was published in 1786; and a second edition appeared in the following year. "Tam O'Shanter," a fairy story burlesqued, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and "The Vision," are among the most noteworthy pieces in this collection; none of them attain to any great length. After his marriage to Jean Armour, he settled on the farm of Ellisland, uniting the functions of an exciseman to those of a farmer. But the farm proved a bad speculation, —

"Spem mentita seges, bos est enectus arando," —

And, having received a more lucrative appointment in the excise, Burns gave up Ellisland, and removed to Dumfries. Here the habit of intemperance, to indulgence in which the nature of his employment unhappily supplied more than ordinary temptations, gradually made him its slave; disappointment and self-reproach preyed upon his heart; want stared him in the face; and the greatest of Scottish poets, having become a mere wreck of his former self, sank, in his thirty-seventh year, into an untimely grave.

"The Rolliad" was a satirical effusion, commenced in 1784 by several writers belonging to the party of Fox and the recently defeated coalition, and directed against Mr. Pitt and his supporters in parliament. The chief of these writers was a Dr. Lawrence; he was

assisted by George Ellis, a Mr. Fitzpatrick, and two other persons named Richardson and Tickle. The origin of the name was this: Mr. Rolle, the member for Devonshire, in a speech made on the Westminster Scrutiny,[1] had informed the public that he was descended from "Duke Rollo." A ludicrous pedigree of "John Rolle, Esq.," thereupon appeared, said to be "extracted from the records of the Herald's Office." This was followed by the "Dedication of the Rolliad, an Epic Poem in twelve Books," written by Fitzpatrick, and addressed to Mr. Rolle. Amidst a great deal of sarcastic eulogy, copiously garnished with puns, the dedicator congratulates Mr. Rolle, because, as his ancestor Rollo fought for William the Conqueror, —

> "So you with zeal support through each debate
> The conquering William [Pitt] of a later date."

After this one would expect the poem itself; but the joke is that there is no poem. "The Rolliad" itself, though affirmed by its critics to have reached the twentieth edition, is wholly imaginary: we only know of it through the supposed extracts from the poem given in the "Criticisms on the Rolliad," which appeared in twenty-one successive numbers. In these Pitt, Dundas, the India Board, and Warren Hastings, with many other persons and things, were assailed, often with cruel wit and pungent sarcasm; yet it seems that the victims were not sufficiently interesting, nor the satire quite potent enough, to prevent "The Rolliad" from having almost fallen into oblivion.

Dr. Darwin, an eminent physician, published his "Loves of the Plants" in 1789. In this strange poem there is a great deal about botany and electricity, and the steam-engine, and weaving, and cotton-spinning, but nothing about any subject suitable for poetic treatment. Here, for instance, is an invocation to steam: —

> "Soon shall thy arm, unconquered Steam, afar
> Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;
> Or, on wide waving wings expanded, bear
> The flying chariot through the fields of air.
> Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
> Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move;
> Or warrior bands alarm the gaping crowd,
> And armies sink beneath the shadowy cloud."

"The Loves of the Plants" are only a portion of a larger work, entitled "The Botanic Garden."

Dr. John Wolcot, better known as "Peter Pindar," wrote coarse

[1] Instituted by the Government with the view of unseating Fox for Westminster, after the famous election of 1784.

and fluent satires against the king, the Royal Academicians, Dr. Johnson, James Boswell, Gifford, and others. "The Lousiad," in which a little incident, said to have occurred at the royal table, is made the subject of a long satirical and mock-heroic poem, appeared in 1785.[1] Gifford, besides a reply to Wolcot, called an "Epistle to Peter Pindar," is the author of the "Baviad" (1794) and "Mæviad" (1796), two clever satires on a school of namby-pamby poets and poetesses, called, from the assumed name of their leader, Mr. Robert Merry, "Della-Cruscans." Lastly, Robert Bloomfield, a farmer's boy in early life, and then a shoemaker, gave to the world, in 1800, his excellent descriptive poem of "The Farmer's Boy."

The Drama, 1745–1800: Home, Johnson, Moore, Mason, Colman, Murphy, Goldsmith, Foote, Sheridan.

The tragic stage resumed in this period, under the able management of Garrick, a portion of its former dignity; but no original tragedies of importance were composed. Home's play of "Douglas," known to all schoolboys as the source of that familiar burst of eloquence beginning, —

> "My name is Norval: on the Grampian Hills
> My father feeds his flocks," &c., —

appeared in 1757. Johnson's tragedy of "Irene," produced at Drury Lane by Garrick in 1749, was coldly received, owing to the want of sustained tragic interest. When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, the sturdy lexicographer replied, "Like the Monument." When we have mentioned Moore's "Gamester" (1775), celebrated for its deeply affecting catastrophe, and Mason's "Elfrida" (1752) and "Caractacus" (1759), our list of tragedies of any note is exhausted.

The comedy of manners, as exemplified by the plays of Congreve and Farquhar, had gradually degenerated into the genteel or sentimental comedy, in which Colman the elder and Arthur Murphy were proficients.

[1] See p. 418.

Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man" (1768) was a clever attempt to bring back the theatrical public to the old way of thinking, which demanded "little more than nature and humor, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous." Delineation of character was therefore his principal aim. "She Stoops to Conquer," a piece written on the same plan, appeared, and had a great run, in 1773. Foote, the actor, wrote several clever farces between 1752 and 1778, of which "The Liar" and "The Mayor of Garratt" are among the most noted.

Sheridan, the son of an Irish actor and a literary lady, after marrying the beautiful actress Miss Linley, in defiance of a crowd of rivals, and after being for years the life of society at Bath, connected himself with the stage, and produced "The Rivals" in 1775. All his other comedies appeared in the ensuing five years; viz., "The Duenna," "The School for Scandal," "The Critic," and "The Trip to Scarborough." All these plays are in prose; and all, with the exception of "The Duenna," reflect contemporary manners. In the creation of comic character and the conduct of comic dialogue, Sheridan has never been surpassed. His wit flashes evermore; in such a play as "The Rivals," the reader is kept in a state of continual hilarious delight by a profusion of sallies, rejoinders, blunders, contrasts, which seem to exhaust all the resources of the ludicrous. Mrs. Malaprop's "parts of speech" will raise the laughter of unborn generations; and the choleric, generous old father will never find a more perfect representation than Sir Anthony Absolute. In the evolution of his plots he is less happy; nevertheless, in this respect also, he succeeded admirably in "The School for Scandal," which is by common consent regarded as the most perfect of his plays, and is still an established favorite in our theatres.

Learning, 1745–1800: Porson, Lowth, Pococke.

The progress of classical and Oriental learning owed little to England during this period. The one great name that occurs (Edward Gibbon) will be mentioned when we come to speak of the historians. Sloth and ease reigned at the universities; and those great foundations, which in the hands of monks and churchmen in former times had never wholly ceased to minister to learning and philosophy, were now the mere haunts of port-drinking fellows, and lazy, mercenary tutors.[1] Porson, the delicacy of whose Greek scholarship almost amounted to a sense, and who admirably edited several of the plays of Euripides; Bishop Lowth, author of the "Prælectiones" on Hebrew poetry, and of a translation of Isaias; and Pococke, the Arabic scholar,— are the only learned writers whose works are still of value.

Prose Fiction, 1745–1800: Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Miss Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe.

Favored, in the manner before explained, by the continued stability of society, the taste for novels grew from year to year, and was gratified during this period by an abundant supply of fiction. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne worked on at the mine which Defoe had opened. Richardson, who was brought up as a printer, produced his first novel, "Pamela," in 1740. A natural and almost accidental train of circumstances led to his writing it. He had agreed to compose a collection of specimen letters — a polite letter-writer, in fact — for two booksellers; and it occurred to him, while engaged in this task, that the work would be greatly enlivened if the letters were connected by a thread of narrative. The bookseller applauded the

[1] See Gibbon's Memoirs.

notion; and he accordingly worked up the true story of a young woman, — the Pamela of the novel, — which had come to his knowledge a few years before. Henry Fielding, sprung from a younger branch of the noble house of Denbigh, wrote his first novel, "Joseph Andrews" in 1742, to turn "Pamela" into ridicule. Richardson's masterpieces, "Clarissa Harlowe" and "Sir Charles Grandison" appeared successively in 1748 and 1753; Fielding's "Tom Jones" and "Amelia," in 1749 and 1751. Smollett, a Scotchman, wrote, between 1748 and 1771, a number of coarse, clever novels upon the same general plan as those of his English contemporaries; that is, on the plan of "holding the mirror up to nature," and showing to the age its own likeness without flattery or disguise. The best are "Roderick Random" and "Humphrey Clinker." But Richardson wrote always with a moral purpose, which the other two had not; though that does not hinder much that he wrote from being of an objectionable tendency.

In Sterne, humor is carried to its farthest point. His novel of "Tristram Shandy" [1] is like no other novel ever written: it has no interest of plot or of incident; its merit and value lie partly in the humor with which the characters are drawn and contrasted, partly in that other kind of humor which displays itself in unexpected transitions, and curious trains of thought. The first two volumes of "Tristram Shandy" appeared in 1759. "The Sentimental Journey," being a narrative of a tour in France, in which the author assumes credit for the utmost delicacy of sentiment, and the most exquisite refinement of sensibility, was published shortly before his death in 1768. The character and life of Sterne have been admirably portrayed by Thackeray, in his "Lectures on the English Humorists."

[1] See p. 468.

Johnson's tale of "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," appeared in 1759. In Lord Brougham's "Life of Voltaire," Johnson is reported to have said that, had he seen Voltaire's "Candide," which appeared shortly before, he should not have written "Rasselas," because both works travel nearly over the same ground. Nothing, however, can be more different than the tone and spirit of the tales. Each writer rejects the optimism of Leibnitz, and pictures a world full of evil and misery. But the Frenchman founds on this common basis his sneers at religion, and at the doctrine of an overruling Providence; while the Englishman represents the darkest corners of the present life as irradiated by a compensating faith in immortality, which alone can explain their existence.

Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," the book which, by its picturesque presentation of the manners and feelings of simple people, first led Goethe to turn with interest to the study of English literature, was published in 1766. "The Man of Feeling," by Henry Mackenzie, appeared in 1771. Its author, who wrote it while under the potent spell of Sterne's humor and the attraction of Johnson's style, lived far on into the nineteenth century, and learned to feel and confess the superior power of the author of "Waverley." "The Man of the World" and "Julia de Roubigné" are later works by the same hand. Frances Burney created a sensation by her novel of "Evelina," published in 1778; "the best work of fiction that had appeared since the death of Smollett."[1] It was followed by "Cecilia" (1782), and, at a long interval both of time and merit, by "Camilla," in 1796.

Between the works just mentioned, and the writings of Godwin, there is a gulf interposed, such as marks

[1] Macaulay's Essays.

the transition from one epoch of world-history to another. Instead of the moralizing, the sketches of manners, and delineations of character, on which the novelists of this age had till then employed their powers, we meet with impassioned or argumentative attacks upon society itself, as if it were so fatally disordered as to require reconstruction from top to bottom. The design of "Caleb Williams," published in 1794, is to represent English society as so iniquitously constituted as to enable a man of wealth and position to trample with impunity upon the rights of his inferiors, and, though himself a criminal of the darkest dye, to brave the accusations of his poor and unfriended opponent, and succeed in fixing upon him, though innocent, the brand of guilt. Besides "Caleb Williams," Godwin wrote the strange romance of "St. Leon," the hero of which has found the *elixir vitæ*, and describes the descent of his undecaying life from century to century. About the close of the period, Mrs. Radcliffe wrote "The Mysteries of Udolpho," and "The Romance of the Forest" — two thrilling romances of the Kotzebue school, in which stirring and terrible events succeed each other so rapidly, that the reader is, or ought to be, kept in a whirl of horror and excitement from the beginning to the end. Horace Walpole's "Castle of Otranto" was meant as a satire upon novels of this class, though, as he relates with great enjoyment, numberless simple-minded novel-readers took it for a serious production of the romantic school.

Oratory, 1745–1800: Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, &c.

This is the great age of English eloquence. Perhaps no country in the world ever possessed at one time such a group of orators as that whose voices were heard in parliament and in Westminster Hall during

these fifty years. Chatham, Burke, Fox, Erskine, Pitt, Sheridan, and Grattan! It seemed as if the country could not bring to maturity two kinds of imaginative genius at once: the age of the great poets — of Milton, Dryden, and Pope — passes away before the age of the great orators begins. Our limits will only permit us to advert to a few celebrated orations. Every one has heard of the last speech of the great Lord Chatham, in April, 1778, "the expiring tones of that mighty voice when he protested against the dismemberment of this ancient monarchy, and prayed that, if England must fall, she might fall with honor."[1] The eloquence of Burke, —

> "Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing when they thought of dining,"[2] —

though it often flew over the heads of those to whom it was addressed, was to be the admiration and delight of unborn generations. The speech on the conciliation of America (1775), that addressed to the electors of Bristol (1780),[3] that on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (1785), and those delivered on the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1788), may be considered his greatest efforts. Upon a subject connected with, and leading to, this impeachment, — the conduct of Warren Hastings to the Begums of Oude, — Sheridan delivered, in 1787, a speech which was unfortunately not reported, but which appears to have made a more profound and permanent impression upon the hearers than any speech recorded in the annals of parliament. "Mr. Windham, twenty years later, said that the speech deserved all its fame, and was, in spite of some faults of taste such as were seldom wanting either in

[1] Arnold's Roman History, vol. i.
[2] From Goldsmith's Retaliation.
[3] See p. 473.

the literary or the parliamentary performances of Sheridan, the finest that had been delivered within the memory of man."[1] Grattan during many years was the foremost among a number of distinguished orators who sat in the Irish parliament; and his fiery eloquence, exerted at a period when England lay weakened and humiliated by her failure in America, extorted for that body, in 1782, the concession of legislative independence. Pitt's speech on the India Bill in 1784, explaining and defending his proposal of the system of double government, which has been lately (1858) superseded, as well as his speeches on the slave-trade and the Catholic Relief Bill, though not exactly eloquent, should be read as embodying the views of a great practical statesman upon subjects of deep and permanent interest. Erskine was a cadet of a noble but needy family in Scotland. He crossed the border early in life, raised himself, by his remarkable powers as an advocate, to the position of lord chancellor, and died on his way back to his native country, in his seventy-third year.

Pamphlets, Miscellanies, 1745–1800: Junius, Burke, Johnson, Hawkesworth.

The famous "Letters of Junius," addressed to "The Public Advertiser," extend over the period from the 21st January, 1769, to the 21st January, 1772. Under his impenetrable mask, the writer first attacks the different members of the ministry of the Duke of Grafton, to whom, as premier, eleven of the letters are addressed, in which the life and character, both public and private, of the minister, are exposed with keen and merciless satire. The thirty-fifth letter is addressed to the king, and concludes with the well-known daring words,

[1] Macaulay's Essays, article, Warren Hastings.

"The prince who imitates their [the Stuarts'] conduct should be warned by their example, and, while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember, that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another." The mystery about the authorship, which volumes have been written to elucidate, has without doubt contributed to the fame of the Letters. The opinions, however, of the best judges have been of late years converging to a settled belief, that Sir Philip Francis, a leading opposition member in the House of Commons, was Junius, and that no other person could have been.

Johnson is the author of four pamphlets, all on the Tory side in politics. He was often taunted with writing in favor of the reigning dynasty, by which he had been pensioned, while his real sympathies lay with the house of Stuart. But his prejudices, rather than his reason, were Jacobite. He said, that, if holding up his little finger would have given the victory at Culloden to Prince Charles Edward, he was not sure that he would have held it up, and he jokingly told Boswell, that "the pleasures of cursing the house of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, were amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." "The False Alarm" appeared in 1770, the "Thoughts on the Late Transactions respecting the Falkland Islands" (in which there is a well-known invective against Junius) in the following year. "The Patriot" came out in 1774; and "Taxation no Tyranny," in 1775. This last pamphlet was written at the desire of the incapable and obstinate ministry of Lord North, as a reply to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. This tirade against brave men, for defending their liberties in the style of their English forefathers, shows how mischievously a great mind may

be blinded by the indulgence of unexamined prejudices.

The longer political writings of Burke we shall consider as contributions to political science, and treat under the head of philosophy. The remaining treatises may be divided into four classes, — as relating, 1, to general home politics; 2, to colonial affairs; 3, to French and foreign affairs; 4, to the position and claims of the Irish Catholics. Among the tracts of the first class, the "Sketch of a Negro Code" (1792), an attempt to mediate between the planters and the abolitionists, by proposing to place the slave-trade under stringent regulations, and concurrently to raise the condition of the negroes in the West Indies by a series of humane measures borrowed mostly from the Spanish code, deserves special mention for its far-sighted wisdom. His tracts on American affairs were, like his speeches, on the side of conciliation and concession. Upon the subject of the French Revolution he felt so keenly, that his dislike of the policy deepened into estrangement from the persons of its English sympathizers. He broke with his old friend Fox, and refused to see him even when lying on the bed of mortal sickness. The last of the four letters "On a Regicide Peace" is dated in 1797, the year of his death; and the manuscript was found unfinished, as if the composition had been arrested only by physical inability to proceed. Against the penal laws then weighing upon the Irish Catholics, he spoke and wrote with a generous pertinacity. The memory of his mother had perhaps as much to do with this as the native enlightenment and capacity of his mind. His writings on this question, in its various aspects, extend over more than thirty years of his life, from 1766 to 1797. His last "Letter on the Affairs of Ireland" was written but a

few months before his death. He avows that he has not "power enough of mind or body to bring out his sentiments with their natural force," but adds, "I do not wish to have it concealed, that I am of the same opinion to my last breath which I entertained when my faculties were at the best."

The commencement of "The Rambler" in March, 1750, marked an attempt, on the part of Johnson, to revive the periodical miscellany, which had sunk into disrepute since the death of Addison. Of all the papers in "The Rambler," from the commencement to the concluding number dated 2d March, 1752, only three were not from the pen of Johnson. Although many single papers were admirable, the miscellany was pervaded by a certain cumbrousness and monotony, which prevented it from obtaining a popularity comparable to that of "The Spectator." "The Adventurer" was commenced by Dr. Hawkesworth in 1753. In that and the following year, Johnson furnished a few articles for it, signed with the letter T. "The Idler," which was even less successful than "The Rambler," was carried on during two years, from April, 1758, to April, 1760. All but twelve of the hundred and three articles were written by Johnson. For many years afterwards this style of writing remained unattempted.

Historians, 1745–1800: Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Russell, Mitford, Warton. Biographers: Boswell, &c.

The best, or at any rate the best-known, historical compositions in our literature, date from this period. The Scottish philosopher David Hume, availing himself of the materials which had been collected by Carte, the author of "The Life of Ormond," published between the years 1754 and 1762, his "History of England." The reigns of the Stuarts were the first portion

published; in the treatment of which his anti-Puritanic tone much offended the Whig party, and for some years interfered with the circulation of the book. Johnson was probably right when he said that "Hume would never have written a history, had not Voltaire written one before him." For the "Siècle de Louis XIV." appeared before 1753; and the influence of the "Essai sur les Mœurs" is clearly traceable in Hume's later volumes. William Robertson, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who rose to be principal of the University of Edinburgh, wrote his "History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI." in 1759. In 1769 appeared his "History of the Emperor Charles V.," and in 1777 his "History of America." As his first work had procured for Dr. Robertson a brilliant reputation in his own country, so his histories of Charles V. and of America extended his fame to foreign lands. The former was translated by M. Suard in France; the latter, after receiving the warm approbation of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, was about to be translated into Spanish, when the Government, not wishing their American administration to be brought under discussion, interfered with a prohibition.

Edward Gibbon, who was descended from an ancient family in Kent, was born in 1737. While at Oxford, he became a Roman Catholic from reading the works of Parsons and Bossuet. His father immediately sent him to Lausanne, to be under the care of a Calvinist minister, whose prudent management, seconded as it was by the absence of all opposing influences, in a few months effected his re-conversion to Protestantism. For the rest of his life he was a "philosopher," as the eighteenth century understood the term; in other words, a disbeliever in revealed religion. Concerning the origin of

his celebrated work, he says, "It was at Rome, on the 15th October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city, rather than of the empire; and . . . some years elapsed . . . before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work."[1] The several volumes of the history appeared between 1776 and 1787. The work was translated into several languages; and Gibbon obtained by European consent a place among the historians of the first rank.[2]

Among the minor historians of the period, the chief were, Goldsmith, the author of short popular histories of Greece, Rome, and England; Russell, whose "History of Modern Europe" appeared between 1779 and 1784, and has been continued by Coote and others down to our own times; and Mitford, in whose "History of Greece," the first volume of which was published in 1784, the Tory sentiments of the author find a vent in the continual disparagement of the Athenian democracy. Thomas Warton's "History of English Poetry," a work of great learning and to this day of unimpaired authority, was published between 1774 and 1781. It comes down to the age of Elizabeth. If all her professors of poetry had so well repaid her patronage, the literary reputation of Oxford would have been more considerable than it is.

Among works subsidiary to history, the chief were, in biography, Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" (1781), a dull "Life of Pope" by Ruffhead, Hume's "Autobiography," edited by Adam Smith (1777), and Boswell's "Life of Johnson" (1791). The records of

[1] Memoirs, p. 198. [2] See p. 486.

seafaring enterprise were enriched by the "Voyages" of the great Capt. Cook (1773–1784), of Byron, and Vancouver.

Theology, 1700–1800. — The Deists: Toland, Collins, and others. — Answers of Bentley, Berkeley, Butler, and Warburton. — Methodism: Middleton, Challoner.

The English theological literature of this century includes some remarkable works. A series of open or covert attacks upon Christianity, proceeding from the school of writers known as the English Deists, began to appear about the beginning of the century. Toland led the way with his "Christianity not Mysterious," in 1702; and the series was closed by Bolingbroke's posthumous works, published in 1752, by which time the temper of the public mind was so much altered that Bolingbroke's scoffs at religion hardly aroused any other feelings but those of impatience and indignation. Collins, Tindal, Chubb, Wollaston, and others, took part in the anti-Christian enterprise. In order to reply to them, the Protestant divines were compelled to take different ground from that which their predecessors had chosen in the two previous centuries. Hooker, Andrewes, Laud, Taylor, and the rest of the High Church school, had based the obligation of religious belief, to a large extent, upon Church authority; but their opponents had replied, that, if that principle were admitted, it was impossible to justify the separation from Rome. The Puritans of the old school had set up the Scriptures, as constituting by themselves an infallible religious oracle; but the notorious, important, and interminable differences of interpretation which divided the Biblical party, had discredited this method of appeal. The Quakers and other ultra Puritans, discarding both Church authority and the letter

of Scripture, had imagined that they had found, in a certain inward spiritual illumination residing in the souls of believers, the unerring religious guide which all men desired; but the monstrous profaneness and extravagance to which this doctrine of the inward light had often conducted its adherents, had brought this expedient also into discredit. The only course left for the divines was to found the duty of accepting Christianity upon the dictates of common-sense and reason. The Deists urged that the Christian doctrines were irrational. The divines met them on their own ground, and contended, that, on the contrary, revelation was in itself so antecedently probable, and was supported by so many solid proofs, that it was but the part of prudence and good sense to accept it. The *reasonableness* of Christianity, the *evidences* for Christianity, the *proofs* of revelation — such was the tenor of all their replies. It has well been called a rationalizing age, — *Seculum Rationalisticum.* Among the crowd of publications issued by the Christian apologists, there are three or four which have obtained a permanent place in general literature. The first is Bentley's "Phileleutherus Lipsiensis" (1713), written in answer to Collins's "Discourse on Free Thinking." This is a short and masterly tract, in which the great Aristarch proved, with reference to some cavilling objections which Collins had derived from the variety of readings in the manuscripts, that the text of the New Testament was, on the whole, in a better and sounder state than that of any of the Greek classical authors. The second is Bishop Berkeley's "Alciphron," published in 1732. This treatise is singularly delightful reading. The beauty of the language, the easy and artless graces of the style, the lucidity of the reasoning, the fairness shown to the other side (for Berkeley always treats his

opponents like a gentleman, and gives them credit for sincerity, not with supercilious and censorious arrogance, like such writers as Bishop Warburton), are among its many excellences. In form it is a dialogue, carried on between Dion, Euphranor, and Crito, the defenders of the Christian doctrine and the principles of morals; and Alciphron and Lysicles, the representatives of free-thinking, or, as Euphranor names them in imitation of Cicero, "minute philosophers." Alciphron frankly avows that the progress of free inquiry has led him to disbelieve in the existence of God, and the reality of moral distinctions; he is, however, gradually driven from position after position by the ingenious questionings, *Socratico more*, of Euphranor and Crito, and, after a long and stubborn contest, allows himself to be vanquished by the force of truth.

The third is the "Analogy of Religion, both Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature" (1736), by Bishop Butler. Of this profound and difficult piece of argumentation, the exact force and bearing of which can only be mastered by close and continuous study, some notion as to the general scope can be derived from the summary, found near the conclusion, of the principal objections against religion to which answers have been attempted in the book. The first of these objections is taken from the tardiness and gradual elaboration of the plan of salvation; to which it is answered that such also is the rule in nature, gradual change — "continuity," as we now call it — being distinctive of the evolution of God's cosmical plan. The second stumbles at the appointment of a Mediator; to which the consideration is opposed, how God does in point of fact, from day to day, appoint others as the instruments of his mercies to us. The third proceeds from those who are staggered by the doctrine of redemp-

tion, and suggests that reformation is the natural and reasonable remedy for moral delinquency; to which it is answered, among other things, that even the heathen instinct told them that this was insufficient, and led them to the remedy of sacrifice. The fourth is taken from the light of Christianity not being universal, nor its evidence so strong as might possibly have been given us: its force is weakened or rebutted, by observing, first, how God dispenses his ordinary gifts in such great variety, both of degrees and kinds, amongst creatures of the same species, and even to the same individuals at different times; second, how "the evidence upon which we are naturally appointed to act in common matters, throughout a very great part of life, is doubtful in a high degree." "Probability," says Butler in another place, "is the guide of life."

As against the Deists, the controversy was now decided. It was abundantly proved that the fact of a revelation was, if not demonstrable, yet so exceedingly probable that no prudent mind could reject it, and that the Christian ethics were not inconsistent with, but a continuation and expansion of, natural morality. Deism accordingly fell into disrepute in England about the middle of the century. But in France the works of some of the English Deists became known through the translations of Diderot and the encyclopædists, and doubtless co-operated with those of Voltaire in causing the outburst of irreligion which followed the Revolution of 1789.

One more of these apologetic works must be mentioned, "The Divine Legation of Moses," by Bishop Warburton (1743). This writer, known for his arrogant temper, to whom Mallet addressed a pamphlet inscribed, "To the most Impudent Man alive," had considerable intellectual gifts. His friendship with

Pope, whose "Essay on Man" he defended against the censures of Crousaz, first brought him into notice. The favor of Queen Caroline, whose discerning eye real merit or genius seldom escaped, raised him to the episcopal bench. The full title of the controversial work above mentioned is, "The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist, from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation." The introduction is in the form of a "Dedication to the Free-Thinkers," in which, while protesting against the buffoonery, scurrility, and other unfair arts which the anti-Christian writers employed in controversy, Warburton carefully guards himself from the supposition of being hostile to the freedom of the press. "No generous and sincere advocate of religion," he says, "would desire an adversary whom the laws had before disarmed." [1]

The rise of Methodism dates from about 1730. It was a re-action against the coldness and dryness of the current Protestant theology, which has been described as "polished as marble, but also as lifeless and cold." With its multiplied "proofs" and "evidences," and appeals to reason, it had failed to make Christianity better known or more loved by its generation; its authors are constantly bewailing the inefficacy of their own arguments, and the increasing corruption of the age. Methodism appealed to the heart, thereby to awaken the conscience and influence the will; and this is the secret of its astonishing success. It originated in the prayer-meetings of a few devoutly disposed young men at Oxford, whom Wesley joined, and among whom he at once became the leading spirit. He was himself

[1] The materials of the above sketch are partly taken from an able paper by Mr. Pattison in the volume of Essays and Reviews.

much influenced by Count Zinzendorf, the founder of Moravianism; but his large and sagacious mind refused to entangle itself in mysticism; and, after a curious debate, they parted, and each went his own way. After fruitlessly endeavoring for many years to accommodate the new movement to the forms of the Establishment, Wesley organized an independent system of ministerial work and government for the sect which he had called into existence. After the middle of the century, multitudes of human beings commenced to crowd around the newly opened manufacturing and mining centres in the northern counties. Neither they nor their employers took much thought about their religious concerns. Hampered by their legal status, and traditionally suspicious of any thing approaching to enthusiasm, the clergy of the Established Church neglected this new demand on their charity; and miners and factory hands would have grown up as Pagans in a Christian land, had not the Wesleyan irregulars flung themselves into the breach, and endeavored to bring the gospel, according to their understanding of it, within the reach of these untended flocks. The movement obtained a vast extension, and has, of course, a literature to represent it; but from its sectarian position the literature of Methodism is, to use an American phrase, *sectional* merely; it possesses no permanent or general interest. Wesley himself, and perhaps Fletcher of Madeley, are the only exceptions.

Conyers Middleton wrote in 1729 his "Letter from Rome," in which he attempted to derive all the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic ritual from the Pagan religion, which it had supplanted. An able reply, "The Catholic Christian Instructed," was written by Challoner (1737), to the effect that Middleton's averments were in part untrue, in part true, but not to the purpose of his argument, since an external resemblance

between a Pagan and a Christian rite was of no importance, provided the inward meaning of the two were different.

Philosophy, 1700–1800; Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Butler, Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Hartley, Tucker, Priestley, Paley.

Nothing more than a meagre outline of the history of philosophy in this period can here be attempted. Those who devoted themselves to philosophical studies were numerous; this, in fact, up to past the middle of the century, was the fashionable and favorite pursuit with the educated classes. The most famous work of the greatest poet of the age, Pope's "Essay on Man," is a metaphysico-moral treatise in heroic verse. The philosophers may be classed under various heads: we have the sensational school, founded by Locke, of whom we have already spoken; the idealists, represented by Bishop Berkeley; the sceptical school, founded by Hume; the common-sense or Scotch school, comprising the names of Reid, Brown, and Dugald Stewart; and the moral ists, represented by Butler, Smith, and Paley.

There are few philosophers whose personal character it is more agreeable to contemplate than George Berkeley, the Protestant bishop of Cloyne. He was born in 1684 at Kilevin, in the county of Kilkenny, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained a fellowship in 1707. About four years later he went over to London, where he was received with open arms. There seems to have been something so winning about his personal address, that criticism, when it questioned his positions, forgot its usual bitterness; and extraordinary natural gifts seem for once to have aroused no envy in the beholder. Pope, whose satire was so unsparing, ascribes, —

"To Berkeley every virtue under heaven;" —

And Atterbury, after an interview with him, said, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman." [1]

Of Berkeley's share in the controversy with the Deists, we have already spoken. His "Principles of Human Knowledge," published in 1710, contains the idealist system for which his name is chiefly remembered.[2] In devising this, his aim was still practical; he hoped to cut the ground away from beneath the rationalizing assailants of Christianity by proving that the existence of the material universe, the supposed invariable laws of which were set up by the sceptics as inconsistent with revelation, was in itself problematical, since all that we can know directly respecting it is the *ideas* which we form of it, which ideas *may*, after all, be delusive. His other philosophical works are, "Hylas and Philonous," "Siris; or, Reflections on Tar-Water," and a "Theory of Vision." Sir James Mackintosh was of opinion that Berkeley's works were, beyond dispute, the finest models of philosophical style since Cicero.

David Hume, born at Edinburgh in 1711, was educated for the bar. He was never married. He enjoyed through life perfect health, and was gifted with unflagging spirits, and a cheerful, amiable disposition. His passions were not naturally strong; and his sound judgment and good sense enabled him to keep them under control. He died in 1776.

Hume's chief philosophical works are contained in two volumes of Essays and Treatises. The first volume consists of "Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary,"

[1] Mackintosh's Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy, article Berkeley.

[2] See p. 507.

in two parts, originally published in 1742 and 1752 respectively. The second volume contains "The Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,"[1] and other treatises, the whole of which are a revised condensation of "The Treatise on Human Nature," published in 1738, and spoken of in the advertisement to the Essays and Treatises as a "juvenile work," for which the author declined to be responsible in his riper years. In these treatises Hume propounds his theory of universal scepticism. Berkeley had denied matter, or the mysterious somewhat, inferred by philosophers to exist beneath the sensible properties of objects; and Hume went yet further, and denied *mind*, the substance in which successive sensations and reflections are supposed to inhere. That we do perceive, and do reflect, is, he admitted, certain; but what that is which perceives and reflects, whether it has any independent being of itself, apart from the series of impressions of which it is the subject, is a point altogether obscure, and on which, he maintained, our faculties have no means of determining. Philosophy was thus placed in a dilemma, and became impossible.[2]

The Scotch or common-sense school has received ample justice at the hands of Cousin in his "Cours de Philosophie Moderne." It commenced with Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind upon the Principles of Common-Sense," published in 1764. As a re-action against the idealism of Berkeley and the scepticism of Hume, the rise of the common-sense school was natural enough. It said, in effect, "We have a rough, general notion of the existence of matter outside and independently of ourselves, of which no subtlety can deprive us; and the instinctive impulse which we feel to put faith in the results of our mental operations is

[1] See p. 507. [2] See Lewes's History of Philosophy.

an irrefragable proof, and the best that can be given, of the reasonableness of that faith."

Among the moralists of that period, Butler holds the highest place. The fact of the existence in the mind of disinterested affections and dispositions, pointing to the good of others, which Hobbes had denied, Butler, in those admirable "Sermons" preached in the Rolls Chapel, has incontrovertibly established. "In these sermons he has taught truths more capable of being exactly distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established by him, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and therefore more worthy the name of discovery, than any with which we are acquainted; if we ought not, with some hesitation, to except the first steps of the Grecian philosophers towards a "Theory of Morals."[1] Hutcheson, an Irishman, author of an "Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue," and other works, followed in the same track of thought. Hume's "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals" was considered by himself to be the best of his writings; it is, at any rate, the least paradoxical. Adam Smith, in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments," published in 1759, follows Hume in holding the principle of *sympathy* to be the chief source of our moral feelings and judgments. Hartley, in his remarkable book, "Observations on Man" (1749), teaches that the development of the moral faculty within us is mainly effected through the principle of the *association* of ideas, a term first applied in this sense by Locke. Tucker's "Light of Nature" is chiefly metaphysical; so far as he touches on morals, he shows a disposition to return to the selfish theory, in opposition to the view of disinterested moral feelings introduced by

[1] Mackintosh's Dissertation, p. 191.

Butler. Priestley, who, brought up as a Calvinist, embraced Unitarian opinions, and sympathized with the French Revolution, adopted in his "Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity" the belief as to the inevitable character of human actions, which Auguste Comte has extended widely in our own times. In his "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion," Priestley's entire system is laid bare. But neither as theologian nor as philosopher will he be remembered so long as for his claim to a place in the temple of science, in right of his discovery of oxygen. Lastly, William Paley, following Tucker, elaborated in his "Moral and Political Philosophy," published in 1785, his well-known system of utilitarianism. "Virtue," he said, "is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." Mackintosh remarks that it follows as a necessary consequence, from this proposition, that "every act which flows from generosity or benevolence is a vice."

Political Science: Burke, Godwin, Paine.

Hume's political writings, on the Origin of Government, the Protestant Succession, the Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth, &c., form a large portion of the two volumes of Essays and Treatises already mentioned. Hume regards political science as a speculative philosopher; in Burke, the knowledge and the tendencies of the philosopher, the jurist, the statesman, and the patriot, appear all united. The fundamental idea of his political philosophy was, that civil liberty was rather prescriptive than theoretic; that order implied progress, and progress presupposed order; that in a political society the rights of its members were not absolute and unconditional, but strictly relative to, and to be sought in conformity with, the existing con-

stitution of that society. These views are put forth in the most masterly and eloquent manner in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France," published in 1790. Among those who supported in this country the political theories of the French Jacobins and Rousseau, the most eminent were William Godwin and Thomas Paine. The former published his "Inquiry concerning Political Justice" in 1793; the latter was living in America during the war of independence, and, by the publication of his periodical tracts entitled "Common Sense," contributed not a little to chase away the despondency which was beginning at one time to prevail among the Colonists, and to define their position and political aims. The "Rights of Man" appeared in 1792; and the "Age of Reason," a work conceived in the extremest French free-thinking spirit, in 1794.

Political Economy: Adam Smith. — Criticism: Burke, Reynolds, Walpole.

The science of political economy was, if not invented, at least enlarged, simplified, and systematized, by Adam Smith, in his celebrated "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776). The late rise of this science may be ascribed to several causes: to the contempt with which the ancient Greek philosophers regarded the whole business of money-getting; to the aversion entertained by the philosophers of later schools for *luxury*, as the great depraver of morals, whence they would be little disposed to analyze the sources of that wealth, the accumulation of which made luxury possible; lastly, to the circumstance, that, during the middle ages, the clergy were the sole educators of society, and were not likely to undertake the study of phenomena which lay quite out of their track of thought and action. Only when the

laity came to be generally educated, and began to reflect intelligently upon the principles and laws involved in the every-day operations of the temporal life, could a science of wealth become possible.

Certain peculiarities about the East Indian trade of the seventeenth century, which consisted chiefly in the exchange of silks and other Indian manufactures for bullion, gave occasion to a number of pamphlets, in which the true principles of commerce were gradually developed. But what was called the "mercantile system" was long the favorite doctrine both with statesmen and economists, and, indeed, is even yet not quite exploded. By this was meant a system of cunning devices, having for their object, by repressing trade in one direction, and encouraging it in another, to leave the community at the end of each year more plentifully supplied with the precious metals (in which alone wealth was then supposed to consist) than at the end of the preceding. The tradition of over-government, which had come down from the Roman empire, joined to the narrow corporate spirit which had arisen among the great trading cities of the middle ages, led naturally to such views of national economy. Every one knows what efforts it has cost in our own days to establish the simple principle of commercial freedom, — the right to "buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest market." That this principle has at last prevailed, and that money, in so far as it is not itself a mere commodity, is now regarded not as wealth, but as the variable representative of wealth, is mainly due to the great work of Adam Smith.

Burke published in 1756 his celebrated philosophical "Essay" on the origin of our ideas of the "Sublime and Beautiful." He was then a young man, and had studied philosophy in the sensuous school of Locke.

At a later period of his life, he would probably have imported into his essay some of the transcendental ideas which had been brought to light in the interval, and for which his mind presented a towardly and congenial soil. The analysis of those impressions on the mind, which raise the emotion of the sublime or that of the beautiful, is carefully and ingeniously made; the logic is generally sound; and, if the theory does not seem to be incontrovertibly established as a whole, the illustrative reasoning employed in support of it is, for the most part, striking, picturesque, and true. The reader may find it difficult to understand how these two judgments can be mutually consistent; yet it is perfectly intelligible. The theory, for instance, which makes the emotion of the sublime inseparably associated with the sense of the terrible (terror, "the common stock of every thing that is sublime," part ii. sect. 5), is not quite proved; for he gives magnificence — such as that of the starry heavens — as a source of the sublime, without showing (indeed, it would be difficult to show) that whatever was magnificent was necessarily also terrible. But at the same time he proves, with great ingenuity and completeness, that in a great many cases, when the emotion of the sublime is present, the element of terror is, if not a necessary condition, at any rate, a concomitant and influential circumstance. His theory of the beautiful is equally ingenious, but perhaps still more disputable. By beauty, he means (part iii. sect. 1) "that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love or some passion similar to it." He labors at length to prove that beauty does not depend upon proportion, nor upon fitness for the end designed; but that it does chiefly depend on the five following properties: 1, smallness; 2, smoothness; 3, gradual variation; 4,

delicacy; 5, mild tone in color. That the emotion of beauty is unconnected with the perception of harmony or proportion, is certainly a bold assertion. However, even if the analysis were ever so accurate and perfect, it might still be maintained that the treatise contains little that is really valuable towards the formation of a sound system of criticism, either in æsthetics or literature. The reason is briefly this, — that the quality which men chiefly look for in works of art and literature, is that which is variously named genius, greatness, nobleness, distinction, the ideal, &c.; where this quality is absent, all Burke's formal criteria for testing the presence of the sublime or the beautiful may be complied with, and yet the work will remain intrinsically insignificant. As applied to nature, the analysis may perhaps be of more value, because the mystery of infinity forms the background to each natural scene: the divine calm of the universe is behind the mountain-peak or the rolling surf, and furnishes punctually, and in all cases, that element of nobleness which, in the works of man, is present only in the higher souls. Hence, there being no fear that we shall ever find Nature, if we understand her, mean, or trivial, or superficial, — as we often find the human artist, — we may properly concentrate our attention on the sources of the particular emotions which her scenes excite; and, among these particular emotions, those of the sublime and beautiful are second to none in power.

Sir Joshua Reynolds's excellent "Discourses on Painting," or rather the first part of them, appeared in 1779. Horace Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting," compiled from the unwieldly collections of Virtue on the lives and works of British artists, were published between the years 1761 and 1771.

CHAPTER VII.

MODERN TIMES.

1800–1850.

Ruling Ideas: Theory of the Spontaneous in Poetry.

As no summary which our limits would permit us to give of the political events between 1800 and 1850 could add materially to the student's knowledge respecting a period so recent, we shall omit here the historical sketch which we prefixed to each of the two preceding chapters.

At once, from the opening of the nineteenth century, we meet with originality and with energetic convictions. The deepest problems are sounded with the utmost freedom: decorum gives place to earnestness; and principles are mutually confronted, instead of forms. We speak of England only: the change to which we refer set in at an earlier period in France and Germany. In the main, the chief pervading movement of society may be described as one of re-action against the ideas of the eighteenth century. Those ideas were, in brief, rationalism and formalism, both in literature and in politics. Pope, for instance, was a rationalist, and also a formalist, in both respects. In his views of society, he took the excellence of no institution for granted; he would not admit that antiquity in itself constituted a claim to reverence: on the contrary, his turn of mind disposed

him to try all things, old and new, by the test of their rationality, and to ridicule the multiplicity of forms and usages — some marking ideas originally irrational, others whose meaning, once clear and true, had been lost or obscured through the change of circumstances — which encumbered the public life of his time. Yet he was, at the same time, a political formalist in this sense, that he desired no sweeping changes, and was quite content that the social system should work on as it was. It suited him; and that was enough for his somewhat selfish philosophy. Again: in literature he was a rationalist, and also a formalist; but here in a good sense. For in literary, as in all other art, the *form* is of prime importance; and his destructive logic, while it crushed bad forms, bound him to develop his powers in strict conformity to good ones. Now, the reaction against these ideas was twofold. The conservative re-action — while it pleaded the claims of prescription, denounced the aberrations of reason, and endeavored to vindicate or resuscitate the ideas lying at the base of existing political society, which the rationalism of the eighteenth century had sapped — rebelled at the same time against the arbitrary rules with which not Pope himself, but his followers, had fettered literature. The liberal, or revolutionary re-action, while, accepting the destructive rationalism of the eighteenth century, scouted its political formalism as weak and inconsistent, joined the conservative school in rebelling against the reign of the arbitrary and the formal in literature. This, then, is the point of contact between Scott and the conservative school on the one hand, and Coleridge, Godwin, Byron, Shelley, and the rest of the revolutionary school, on the other. They were all agreed that literature, and especially poetry, was becoming a cold, lifeless affair, conforming to all the rules and proprieties, but divorced

from living nature, and the warm spontaneity of the heart. They imagined that the extravagant and exclusive admiration of the classical models had occasioned this mischief; and fixing their eyes on the rude yet grand beginnings of modern society, which the spectacle of the feudal ages presented to them, they thought that by imbuing themselves with the spirit of romance and chivalry, by coming into moral contact with the robust faith and energetic passions of a race not yet sophisticated by civilization, they would wake up within themselves the great original forces of the human spirit, — forces which, once set in motion, would develop congenial literary forms, produced not by the *labor limæ*, but by a true inspiration.

Especially in poetry was this the case. To the artificial, mechanical, didactic school, which Pope's successors had made intolerable, was now opposed a counter theory of the poetic function, which we may call the theory of the spontaneous. As light flows from the stars, or perfume from flowers, as the nightingale cannot help singing, nor the bee refrain from making honey, — so, according to this theory, poetry is the spontaneous emanation of a musical and beautiful soul. "The poet is born, and is not made;" and so is it with his poetry. To pretend to construct a beautiful poem, is as if one were to try to construct a tree: something dead and wooden will be the result in either case. In a poet, effort is tantamount to condemnation; for it implies the absence of inspiration. For the same reason, to be consciously didactic is incompatible with the true poetic gift. For whatever of great value comes from a poet is not that which he wills to say, but that which he cannot help saying; that which some higher power — call it Nature or what you will — dictates through his lips as through an oracle.

This theory, which certainly had many attractions, and contained much truth, led to various important results. It drove away from Helicon many versifiers who had no business there, by depriving them of an audience. The Beatties, Akensides, Youngs, and Darwins, who had inflicted their dulness on the last century under the impression that it was poetry, — a delusion shared by their readers, — had to "pale their ineffectual fire," and decamp, when their soporific productions were confronted with the startling and direct utterances of the disciples of the spontaneous. On the other hand, the theory produced new mischiefs, and generated new mistakes. It did not silence inferior poets; but they were of a different class from what they had been before. It was not now the moralist or the dabbler in philosophy, who, imagining himself to have important information to convey to mankind, and aiming at delighting while he instructed, constructed his epic, or ode, or metrical essay, as the medium of communication. It was rather the man gifted with a fatal facility of rhyme, with a mind teeming with trivial thoughts and corresponding words, who was misled by the new theory into confounding the rapidity of his conceptions with the spontaneity of genius, and into thinking revision or curtailment of them a kind of treason to the divine afflatus. Such writers generally produced two or three pretty pieces, written at their brightest moments, amidst a miscellaneous heap of "fugitive poems" — rightly so called — which were good for little or nothing. Upon real genius the theory acted both for good and for evil. Social success, upon which even the best poets of the eighteenth century had set the highest value, was despised by the higher minds of the new school. They loved to commune with nature and their own souls in solitude, believing that here was

the source of true poetic inspiration. The resulting forms were, so far as they went, most beautiful and faultless in art; they were worthy of the profound and beautiful thoughts which they embodied. In diction, rhythm, proportion, melody, — in every thing, in short, that constitutes beauty of form, — no poems ever composed attained to greater perfection than Shelley's "Skylark" or Keats's "Hyperion." Yet these forms, after all, were not of the highest order. The judgment of many generations has assigned the palm of superiority among poetic forms to the Epos and the Drama; yet in neither of these did the school of poets of which we speak achieve any success of moment. This was probably due to the influence of the theory which we are considering. The truth is, that no extensive and complex poem was ever composed without large help from that constructive faculty, which it was the object of the theory to depreciate. Even Shakspeare, whom it is — or was — the fashion to consider as a wild, irregular poet, writing from impulse, and careless of art, is known to have carefully altered and re-arranged some of his plays, "Hamlet," for instance, and by so doing to have greatly raised their poetic value. Virgil, Tasso, Dante, must all have expended a great amount of dry intellectual labor upon their respective masterpieces, in order to harmonize the parts and perfect the forms of expression. The bright moments are transitory, even with minds endowed with the highest order of imagination; but, by means of this labor, —

> "Tasks in hours of insight willed
> May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

But this truth was obscured, or but dimly visible, to minds which viewed poetry in the light we have described. Even Scott — true worker though he was

—may be held to have produced poems not commensurate with the power that was in him, owing to a want of due pains in construction, attributable to the influence of the prevalent ideas.

Poetry: Sir Walter Scott, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Crabbe, Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Wordsworth, Hood, Hogg, &c.

"The Life of Scott," edited by his son-in-law Lockhart, opens with a remarkable fragment of autobiography. Unhappily, it extends to no more than sixty pages, and conducts us and the writer only to the epoch where, his education being finished, he was about to launch forth into the world; but these few manly and modest pages contain a record of the early years of a great life, which cannot easily be matched in interest. Scott was born at Edinburgh on the 15th August, 1771. His father, descended from the border family, or clan, of Scott, of which the chieftain was the Duke of Buccleuch, was a writer to the signet; that is, a solicitor belonging to the highest branch of his profession. A lameness in the right leg, first contracted when he was eighteen months old, was the cause of his being sent away to pass in the country many of those years which most boys pass at school. He was fond of reading; and the books which touched his fancy or his feelings made an indelible impression on him. Forty years later, he remembered the deep delight with which, at the age of thirteen, stretched under a plane-tree in a garden sloping down to the Tweed at Kelso, he had first read Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." "From this time," he says, "the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or the remains of our fathers' piety or splendor, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have grati-

fied by travelling over half the globe." When he was nineteen years old, his father gave him his choice, whether to adopt his own profession, or to be called to the bar. Scott preferred the latter; he studied the Scotch law with that conscientious and cheerful diligence which distinguished him through life, and began to practise as an advocate in 1792, with fair prospects of professional success. But the bent of nature was too strong for him: literature engrossed more and more of his time and thoughts; and his first publication, in 1796, of translations of "Lenore," and other German poems by Bürger, was soon followed by various contributions to Lewis's "Tales of Wonder," and by the compilation of "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," many pieces in which are original, in the year 1802. In 1797 he had married Charlotte Carpenter (or Charpentier), and settled at Lasswade on the Esk, near "classic Hawthornden." Foreseeing that he would never succeed at the bar, he obtained in 1799, through the influence of the Duke of Buccleuch, the appointment of sheriff of Selkirkshire, to which, in 1806, was added a clerkship in the Court of Session, with a salary of thirteen hundred pounds a year. Both these appointments, which involved magisterial and official duties of a rather burdensome nature, always punctually and conscientiously discharged, Scott held till within a year before his death.

A mind so active and powerful as that of Scott could not remain unaffected by the wild ferment of spirits caused by the breaking-out of the French Revolution; but, in the main, the foundations of his moral and spiritual being remained unshaken by those tempests. His robust common-sense taught him to attend to his own business, in preference to devoting himself to the universal interests of mankind; and his love of what

was ancient, and possessed historic fame, his fondness for local and family traditions, and the predilection which he had for the manners and ideas of the days of chivalry, made the levelling doctrines of the Revolution especially hateful to him. It was otherwise with most of the poets, his contemporaries. Wordsworth, after taking his degree at Cambridge in 1791, — a ceremony for which he showed his contempt by devoting the preceding week to the perusal of "Clarissa Harlowe," — went over to France; and, during a residence there of thirteen months, formed an intimacy with Beaupuis a Girondist general, and with many of the Brissotins at Paris. Southey, upon whose smaller brain and livelier temperament the French ideals acted so powerfully as to throw him completely off his balance, wrote the dramatic sketch of "Wat Tyler" — a highly explosive and seditious production — while at Oxford in 1794, and for some time seriously contemplated joining Coleridge in establishing a Pantisocratic community "on the banks of the Susquehanna." Coleridge, whose teeming brain produced in later life so many systems, or fragments of systems, was in 1794 full of his wonderful scheme of "Pantisocracy," an anticipation of the *phalanstères* of Fourier, and the Icaria of Cabet. In his ode to "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," published in 1798, the Jacobin poet discharges the full vials of his wrath on Mr. Pitt, as the chief opponent of the progress of revolution. The three weird sisters, after expressing their deep obligations to the British statesman, exchange ideas on the subject of the best mode of rewarding him. Famine will gnaw the multitude till they "seize him and his brood;" Slaughter will make them "tear him limb from limb." But Fire taxes their gratitude with poverty of resource: —

"And is this all that you can do
For him who did so much for you?
. . . . . .
I alone am faithful; I
Cling to him everlastingly."

In 1804 Scott removed to Ashestiel, a house overlooking the Tweed, near Selkirk, for the more convenient discharge of his magisterial duties. The *locale* is brought picturesquely before us in the introduction to the first canto of "Marmion:" —

"Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed."

Early in 1805 appeared "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," the first of the series of Scott's romantic poems. Its composition was due to a suggestion of the beautiful Duchess of Buccleuch, who, upon hearing for the first time the wild border legend of Gilpin Horner, turned to Scott, and said, "Why not embody it in a poem?" The "Lay" at once obtained a prodigious popularity.[1] "Marmion" was published in 1808, and severely criticised soon after by Jeffrey in "The Edinburgh Review." Scott's soreness under the infliction, united to his growing aversion for the politics of the "Edinburgh," led him to concentrate all his energies upon the establishment of a rival review; and the "Quarterly" was accordingly set on foot in 1809. "The Lady of the Lake" appeared in 1810.[2] Of these three poems Lockhart

[1] See pp. 393, 434.

[2] See p. 394.

says, "The 'Lay' is generally considered as the most natural and original, 'Marmion' as the most powerful and splendid, and 'The Lady of the Lake' as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful." The "Lay," however, was not entirely original. Scott himself, in the preface to the edition of 1829, acknowledges the obligation under which he lay to Coleridge's poem of "Christabel." This striking fragment, he says, "from the singularly irregular structure of the stanzas, and the liberty which it allows the author to adapt the sound to the sense, seemed to me exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated on the subject of Gilpin Horner. . . . It was in 'Christabel' that I first found [this measure] used in serious poetry; and it is to Mr. Coleridge that I am bound to make the acknowledgment due from the pupil to his master."

His other romantic poems, "The Vision of Don Roderick," "Rokeby," "The Lord of the Isles," "The Bridal of Triermain," and "Harold the Dauntless," all published between 1811 and 1817, manifest a progressive declension. Scott was heartily tired of "Harold" before it was finished, and worked off the concluding portion in an agony of impatience and dissatisfaction. When asked, some years later, why he had given up writing poetry, he simply said, "Because Byron *bet* me." Byron had returned from his long ramble over the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean in 1811, and in the course of the five following years he published his Oriental tales, — "The Bride of Abydos," "The Giaour," "The Siege of Corinth," "The Corsair," [1] "Lara," and "Parisina," which, by their highly colored scenes and impassioned sentiment, made Scott's poetry appear by comparison tame and pale. Writing to the Countess Purgstall in 1821, he says, "In truth, I have

[1] See p. 395.

given up poetry; . . . besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron;" and would moreover, he adds, hesitate "to exhibit in my own person the sublime attitude of the Dying Gladiator;" alluding to the well-known passage in "Childe Harold."

But in 1814 Scott struck out a new path, in which neither Byron nor any other living man could keep pace with him. Ransacking an old cabinet, he happened one day, in the spring of that year, to lay his hand on an old, unfinished manuscript, containing a fragment of a tale on the rising of the clans in 1745, which he had written some years before, but, feeling dissatisfied with, had put by. He now read it over, and thought that something could be made of it. He finished the tale in six weeks, and published it anonymously, under the title of "Waverley; or, A Tale of Sixty Years Since." The impression which it created was prodigious. "Waverley" was soon followed by "Guy Mannering" and "The Antiquary." Between 1816 and 1826 appeared seventeen other novels from the same practised hand. But it was Scott's humor still to preserve the anonymous; and, though many literary men felt all along a moral certainty that the author of "Waverley" was, and could be, no other than the author of "Marmion," and Mr. Adolphus wrote in 1820 an extremely ingenious pamphlet[1] establishing the identity of the two almost to demonstration, yet the public had been so mystified, that it was not till the occasion of a public dinner at Edinburgh, in 1827, when Scott made a formal avowal of his responsibility as the author of the entire series,[2] that all uncertainty was removed.

The noble and generous nature of Scott nowhere appears more conspicuously than in the history of his

[1] Letters on the Authorship of Waverley. [2] See p. 460.

relations with the other eminent poets of his time. Byron, stung by the unsparing criticisms to which Jeffrey subjected his youthful effusions[1] in "The Edinburgh Review," had replied by his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,[2]" in which, including Scott among the poets of the Lake School, he had made him the object of a petulant and unfounded invective. Scott alludes to this attack from the "young whelp of a lord" in many of his letters, but evidently without the slightest feeling of bitterness. When he visited London in the spring of 1815, and was enthusiastically received by the generation, just grown to manhood, which had been fed by his verse, he became acquainted with Byron; and their mutual liking was so strong that the acquaintance in the course of a few weeks almost grew into intimacy. They met for the last time in the autumn of the same year, after Scott's return from Waterloo. Of Coleridge, Scott always spoke with interest and admiration, and endeavored to serve him more than once. With Southey he kept up a pretty constant correspondence; and, besides serving him in other ways, procured the laureateship for him in 1813, after having declined it for himself. Towards Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, whose touchy and irritable pride would have provoked any less generous patron, his kindness was unvarying and indefatigable. With Moore he became acquainted on the occasion of his visit to Ireland in 1825, and received him at Abbotsford later in the same year. The Irish poet made a very favorable impression. Scott says in his diary, "There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him, which is delightful; not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little, very little man, . . . but not insignificant like Lewis.

[1] The "Hours of Idleness." [2] See p. 413.

. . . His countenance is plain but expressive; so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have made it." Of Scott's intercourse with Sir Humphrey Davy, — himself a thorough poet in nature, — Lockhart relates an amusing anecdote: "Scott, Davy, the biographer, and a rough Scotch friend of Sir Walter's named Laidlaw, were together in Abbotsford in 1820; the two latter being silent and admiring listeners during the splendid colloquies of the poet and the philosopher. At last Laidlaw broke out with, 'Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion. Eh, sirs! I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up!'"

In 1826 occurred the crash of Scott's fortunes, through the failure of the houses of Constable and Ballantyne. With the Ballantynes, who were printers, Scott had been in partnership since 1805, though even his dearest friends were ignorant of the fact. How bravely he bore himself in the midst of the utter ruin which came upon him, how strenuously he applied his wonderful powers of thought and work to the task of retrieving his position, how he struggled on till health, faculties, and life itself gave way — these are matters which belong to the story of the man, rather than the author. The novels and other works composed between 1826 and his death in 1832, though they fill very many volumes, manifest a progressive decline of power. "Woodstock" was in preparation at the time when the stroke came; but there is no falling-off in the concluding portion, such as might tell of the agonies of mind through which the writer was passing. To "Woodstock," however, succeeded "Anne of Geierstein," the "Fair Maid of Perth," "Count Robert of Paris," and "Castle Dangerous," all of which, or at

any rate the last two, betoken a gradual obscuration and failure of the powers of imagination and invention. In 1827 he published a "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte." A work on "Demonology and Witchcraft," and "The Tales of a Grandfather," nearly complete the list. In the summer of 1832 he visited Italy in a frigate which the Government placed at his disposal, to recruit, if that were possible, the vital energies of a frame, which, massive and muscular as was the mould in which nature had cast it, was now undermined and worn out by care and excessive toil. But it was too late; and, feeling that the end was near, Scott hurried homewards to breathe his last in his beloved native land. After gradually sinking for two months, he expired at Abbotsford, in the midst of his children, on the afternoon of a calm September day in 1832.

We proceed to name the principal works of the other poets, mentioning them in the order of their deaths.

Keats in his short life contributed many noble compositions to English poetry. His soul thirsted for beauty; his creed, the substance of his religion, was, —

> "That first in beauty should be first in might." [1]

But he was poor, of mean origin, weak in health, scantily befriended. He could not always shut out the external world with its hard, unlovely realities. Like Mulciber, who

> "Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
> On Lemnos, the Ægean isle," —

he was sometimes driven out of the heaven of imagination; and then he fell at once into the depths of dejection. He died in his twenty-seventh year, and wished his epitaph to be, "Here lies one whose name was writ

[1] From Hyperion.

in water." His first work, "Endymion," and his last, "Hyperion," may be regarded, the former as an expansion, the latter as an interpretation, of portions of the mythology of Greece. "Hyperion" is a fragment; in it the sublimity of the colossal shapes of the Titans, contrasted with the glorious beauty of the younger gods, bespeaks an imagination worthy of Dante. The "Eve of St. Agnes" belongs to a different vein of ideas; the legends and superstitions of the middle age furnish its subject and its coloring.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, born in 1792, embraced with fervor, even from his schoolboy days, both the destructive and the constructive ideas of the revolutionary school. He was enthusiastically convinced that the great majority of mankind was, and with trifling exceptions had always been, enslaved by custom, by low material thoughts, by tyranny, and by superstition; and he no less fervently believed in the perfectibility of the individual and of society, as the result of the bursting of these bonds, and of a philosophical and philanthropic system of education. "Queen Mab," written when he was eighteen, but never published with his consent, represents the revolutionary fever when at its utmost heat. The court, the camp, the state, the Church, all are incurably corrupt. Faith is the clinging curse which poisons the cup of human happiness: when that is torn up by the roots, and all institutions now in being have been abolished, then earth may become the "reality of heaven;" there will then be free scope for the dominion of love, and reason and passion will desist from their long combat. The metre is rhymeless and irregular; but there are bursts of eloquent rushing verse, which for soul-fraught music cannot be surpassed. "The Revolt of Islam" (1817), a poem in twelve cantos, in the Spenserian stanza, though it has

most beautiful passages, fails to rivet the interest through insufficiency of plot. It, too, has for its general drift the utter corruption and rottenness of all that is, involving the necessity, for a nation that desired truly to live, of breaking the chains of faith and custom by which it was held. "Peter Bell the Third" (1819) is a satirical attack upon Wordsworth, who had grown, in Shelley's opinion, far too conservative. To a mind like Shelley's it may be conceived how great was the attraction of the story of Prometheus, the great Titan who rebelled against the gods. To this attraction we owe the drama of "Prometheus Unbound." His tragedy of "The Cenci," written at Rome in 1820, shows great dramatic power; but the nature of the story renders it impossible that it should be represented on the stage. The lyrical drama of "Hellas," written in 1821, was suggested by the efforts which the insurgent Greeks were then making to shake off the yoke of their Turkish tyrants.[1] "Adonais" is a wonderfully beautiful elegy on his friend Keats. The "Masque of Anarchy" (1819) was written upon the news reaching him of what has been called the "Manchester Massacre." "Epipsychidion" (1821) is very lovely, but obscure. These are nearly all the longer poems. It is by his shorter pieces that Shelley is best known, — "The Cloud," "To a Skylark," "The Sensitive Plant, "Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples," and many others; in which that quality of ethereal and all-transmuting imagination, which especially distinguishes him from other poets, is most conspicuous. Having lived the last four years of his life in Italy, Shelley met with a premature death by drowning, in the Gulf of Spezzia, in the year 1822.

Byron represents the universal re-action of the nine-

[1] See p. 436.

teenth century against the ideas of the eighteenth. We have seen the literary re-action exemplified in Scott; but the protest of Byron was more comprehensive, and reached to deeper regions of thought. Moody and misanthropical, he rejected the whole manner of thought of his predecessors; and the scepticism of the eighteenth century suited him as little as its popular belief. Unbelievers of the class of Hume and Gibbon did not *suffer* on account of being without faith: their turn of mind was Epicurean; the world of sense and intelligence furnished them with as much of enjoyment as they required; and they had no quarrel with the social order which secured to them the tranquil possession of their daily pleasures. But Byron had a mind of that daring and impetuous temper which, while it rushes into the path of doubt suggested by cooler heads, presently recoils from the consequences of its own act, and shudders at the moral desolation which scepticism spreads over its life. He proclaimed to the world his misery and despair; and everywhere his words seemed to touch a sympathetic chord throughout the cultivated society of Europe. In "Childe Harold" — a poem of reflection and sentiment, of which the first two cantos were published in 1812 — and also in the dramas of "Manfred" and "Cain," the peculiar characteristics of Byron's genius are most forcibly represented.

In these poems, and also in those mentioned on a former page,[1] — besides the splendor of the diction, the beauty of the versification, the richness of the unaccustomed imagery, and in some cases the interest of the narrative, — a personal element mingled, which must be noticed as having much to do with the hold they obtained upon readers of all nations. Byron was generally supposed to be —

"Himself the great sublime he drew."

[1] See p. 311.

In Conrad, or in Hugo, or in Lara, the reader thought he could trace the unconquerable pride, the romantic gloom, nay, even some portion of the exterior semblance, of the man whom, in spite of protestations, all the world believed to have drawn his own portrait in Childe Harold. The turbulent, haughty, passionate, imperial soul of Byron seemed to breathe forth from the page; and this was and still is the secret of its charm.

The "Hours of Idleness," his first work, written in 1807 when he was but nineteen, are poems truly juvenile, and show little promise of the power and versatility to which his mind afterwards attained. The satire of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," already referred to, was written in 1809. All the leading poets of the day came under the lash; but to all except Southey he subsequently made the *amende honorable* in some way or other. With the laureate he was never on good terms; and their mutual dislike broke out at various times into furious discord. Byron could not forgive in Southey, whose opinions in youth had been so wild and Jacobinical, the intolerant Toryism of his manhood. Southey's feelings towards Byron seem to have been a mixture of dread, dislike, and disapproval. In the preface to "The Vision of Judgment," a poem on the death of George III., Southey spoke with great severity of the "Satanic school" of authors, and their leading spirit, alluding to Byron's "Don Juan," which had recently appeared anonymously. This led to a fierce literary warfare, conducted in the columns of newspapers and in other modes, which Byron would have cut short by a challenge, but his friends dissuaded him from sending it. It is little creditable to Southey, that the most acrimonious and insulting of all his letters appeared in "The Courier" a few months after Byron had died in

Missolonghi, a martyr to the cause of the liberty of Greece.

"The Prisoner of Chillon," a soliloquy placed in the mouth of Bonnivard, whom, for his championship of the rights and liberty of Geneva, the Duke of Savoy imprisoned for six years (1530–36) in the castle of Chillon on the Lake of Geneva, appeared in 1816. The tale of "Mazeppa," a Cossack chief distinguished in the wars of Charles XII., and "Beppo," belong to the year 1818. Assailed and censured on every side, when his wife, who had gone on a visit to her father's house, expressed her intention of not returning to him, Byron left England in 1816, and saw his native land no more. How he lived in Italy, it is painful to think; so bright and powerful a spirit, degraded by the indulgence of pride and passion to a state of such deep moral defilement! "Don Juan" appeared, by two or three cantos at a time, between the years 1819 and 1824. It was meant, Byron tells us, "to be a little quietly facetious upon every thing." The readiness, fulness, and variety of Byron's mind are placed by this work in the clearest light; nor less the unbounded audacity of his temper, and his contempt for all ordinary restraints. The metre is the same as the *ottava rima* of the Italian poets. Byron died in 1824.

There is no English poet of whom it is more difficult to express an opinion in a few words than of Crabbe. His poems often raise our admiration; but they also much too frequently provoke our derision. For, though the powers of his mind were very considerable, yet they were attended with a kind of æsthetic blindness, a want of discernment, a deficient sense of what was fit to be said and what was not; thus he was often led to mix up in the strangest manner what was vulgar and trivial with what was dignified and serious. He was a man of

a robust intelligence, but bereft, at least in his ordinary moods, of the finer and more delicate intuitions. The inequality thence arising appears, I think, in all his poems, except "Sir Eustace Grey."

His early publications, "The Library," "The Village," and "The Newspaper," all in heroic verse, date from the eighteenth century. "The Village" was read and revised in the year 1783 by the venerable Samuel Johnson, then in his seventy-fourth year; and owes to him the finest lines that it contains.[1] The collection of poems published in 1807 contained "The Parish Register," "The Hall of Justice," and "Sir Eustace Grey." The first of these is in three parts, which treat of baptisms, marriages, and burials respectively. "Sir Eustace Grey," a poem written in stanzas of short lines, is the story, told by himself, of an inmate of a madhouse, whom cruel injuries and the passions of an unbridled youth had bereft of reason, but whom religious meditation and faith have partially restored.

"The Borough" (1809), an heroic poem in a series of letters, unveils the modes of life of an English seaside town. This must certainly have been the poem which suggested the parody on Crabbe in the "Rejected Addresses." The author's ridiculous anxiety to avoid giving any offence to any one is scarcely exaggerated in the parody, which makes him say, "My profession has taught me carefully to avoid causing any annoyance, however trivial, to any individual, however foolish or wicked." The sudden drops into the region of bathos are quite startling, and have a most comical effect. For example:—

[1] "Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From truth and nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where fancy, leads the way?"

> "Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
> But one poor dredger, where his oysters lie:
> He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
> Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
> *Then drains the remnant of diluted gin,*
> To aid the warmth that languishes within."

Such imbecilities are the more provoking, because they alternate with really fine descriptive passages; such as that on the sea and strand, which may be found in the same letter. A set of "Tales," twenty-one in number, treating to a great extent of subjects similar to those handled in "The Borough," appeared in 1812. The "Tales of the Hall" (1819) have more of a regular plan than any other of the author's works. Two brothers, meeting late in life at the hall of their native village, which has been purchased by the elder brother, relate to each other passages of their past experience. These tales are composed in a more equable strain of language and thought than "The Borough." They never rise very high certainly; they are prosaic and commonplace in the flow of narrative; the moralizing is often threadbare: but they keep clear of the ridiculous lapses which have been noticed in the former work. The character-painting is the best thing about them, being sometimes very close and minute, and evincing much subtilty of appreciation.

Coleridge, the "noticeable man with large gray eyes,"[1] whose equal in original power of genius has rarely appeared amongst men, published his first volume of poems in 1796. His project of a Pantisocratic community, to be founded in America, has been already noticed. Visionary as it was, he received Southey's announcement of his withdrawal from the scheme with a tempest of indignation. For some years after his

[1] Wordsworth.

marriage with the sister of Southey's wife, he supported himself by writing for the newspapers and other literary work. Feeble health, and an excessive nervous sensibility, led him, about the year 1799, to commence the practice of taking opium; and he was enslaved to this miserable habit for twelve or fourteen years. Its paralyzing effects on the mind and character none better knew, or has more accurately described, than himself. What impression he produced at this period upon others, may be gathered from a passage in one of Southey's letters, written in 1804. "Coleridge," he says, "is worse in body than you seem to believe; but the main cause is the management of himself, or, rather, want of management. His mind is in a perpetual St. Vitus's dance, — eternal activity without action. At times he feels mortified that he should have done so little; but this feeling never produces any exertion. I will begin to-morrow, he says; and thus he has been all his life long letting to-day slip. . . . Poor fellow! there is no one thing which gives me so much pain as the witnessing such a waste of unequalled power."

Coleridge's poetical works fill three small volumes, and consist of "Juvenile Poems," "Sibylline Leaves," "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and the plays of "Remorse," "Zapolya," and "Wallenstein," the last being a translation of the play of Schiller. Coleridge's latter years were passed under the roof of Mr. Gillman, a surgeon at Highgate. One who then sought his society has drawn the following picture of the white-haired sage in the evening of his checkered life: —

"Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle, attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions

to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. . . . A sublime man, who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialism, and revolutionary deluges, with 'God, freedom, and immortality' still his; a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer; but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character, and sat there as a kind of *Magus*, girt in mystery and enigma, his Dodona oak-grove (Mr. Gillman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon." [1]

Mr. Carlyle goes on to speak of the disappointing and hazy character of Coleridge's conversation, copious and rich as it was, and occasionally running clear into glorious passages of light and beauty. Such, indeed, is the general effect of his life, and of all that he ever did. One takes up the "Biographia Literaria" (1817), imagining that one will at least find some consistent and intelligible account of the time, place, motive, and other circumstances bearing upon the composition of his different works; but there is scarcely any thing of the kind. The book possesses an interest of its own, on account of the subtle criticism upon Wordsworth's poetry and poetical principles, which occupies the chief portion of it; but when you have arrived at the end of all introductory matter, and at the point where the biography should commence, the book is done; it is all preliminaries, a solid porch to an air-drawn temple. Coleridge died in 1834.

Southey left Oxford as a marked man on account of his extreme revolutionary sympathies, and being unwilling to take orders, and unable, from want of means, to study medicine, was obliged, as he tells us, "perforce to enter the muster-roll of authors." The prevailing

[1] Carlyle's Life of Sterling.

taste for what was extravagant and romantic, exemplified in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels and Kotzebue's plays, perhaps led him to select a wild Arabian legend as the groundwork of his first considerable poem, "Thalaba the Destroyer," published in 1801. "Thalaba," like Shelley's "Queen Mab," is written in irregular Pindaric strophes without rhyme. "Madoc," an epic poem in blank verse, founded on the legend of a voyage made by a Welsh prince to America in the twelfth century, and of his founding a colony there, appeared in 1805; and "The Curse of Kehama," in which are represented the awful forms of the Hindoo Pantheon, and the vast and gorgeous imagery of the Hindoo poetry, in 1811. "Roderic, the Last of the Goths" (1814), a long narrative poem in blank verse, celebrates the fall of the Visi-Gothic monarchy in Spain. "The Vision of Judgment" (1820), in English hexameters, is a lament over the death of George III., whom it leaves in the safe enjoyment of paradise. "A Tale of Paraguay," as it was under Jesuit management, appeared in 1824. Besides these larger works, Southey wrote a multitude of minor poems. His characteristics as an author are indefatigable industry, great skill at manipulating and shaping his materials, extraordinary facility of expression, and considerable powers of reflection and imagination. Nor can humor be denied him, though he had sometimes an unfortunate way of exhibiting it at the expense of the religious beliefs and practices of other nations. In 1803 Southey settled at Greta Hall, near Keswick; and here the remainder of his life was spent, in the incessant prosecution of his various literary undertakings. After the death of his wife, in 1837, he became an altered man. "So completely," he writes, "was she part of myself, that the separation makes me feel like a different creature. While she was herself I had no

sense of growing old." After his second marriage, in 1839, his mind began gradually to fail; and the lamp of reason at last went entirely out. In this sad condition, he died in the year 1843.

Thomas Campbell, though born in Glasgow, was a Highlander both in blood and nature. His "Pleasures of Hope" (1799) was certainly the best continuation of the lines of thought marked out by Pope and the moralists that had appeared since the time of Goldsmith. The poem has little plan, as might be expected from the nature of the subject. It contains a sensational passage concerning slavery, accompanied by the fervent *hope* that it may some day be abolished. There are also some fine lines on fallen Poland, and a masterly sketch of the cheerless creed of the materialist, which is described in order to be rejected. Some lines occur that are now familiar to every ear: e.g., —

> "What though my winged hours of bliss have been,
> Like angel-visits, few and far between?"

And, —

> "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

But "The Pleasures of Hope," is, after all, of the nature of a prize poem, though a brilliant one. Campbell's genius is most attractive in those poems in which his loving Celtic nature has free play. Such are "O'Connor's Child," "Lochiel's Warning," "The Exile of Erin," and "Lord Ullin's Daughter;" in all of which, but especially in the first-named, the tenderness, grace, and passion of the Celtic race shine forth with inexpressible beauty. And the childlike simplicity of love and sorrow, dwelling on little circumstances, — homish, clannish, gregarious, unselfish, — not sturdily self-reliant, but yearning towards others, and feeling its own being incomplete without them; all this, so emi-

nently Celtic in its character, is exhibited in "The Soldier's Dream." "Gertrude of Wyoming" (1809), a tale of Pennsylvania, written in the Spenserian stanza, is soft and musical in its versification, but deficient in sustained epic interest. If Campbell had understood his own temperament, which tended to be dreamy and meditative, he would surely not have selected such a dreamy, lingering measure as the Spenserian stanza for a *narrative* poem. His martial and patriotic songs, "Hohenlinden," "The Battle of the Baltic," "Ye Mariners of England," are rapid and spirit-stirring, but full of faults of expression. "The Last Man" is interesting from the nature of the subject: it gives us the soliloquy of the last representative of the human race, uttered from among tombs upon the crumbling earth; but the effort is more ambitious than successful, and many expressions and images are overstrained. Campbell died in 1844.

To Wordsworth, from his very childhood, life seems to have been a dream of beauty, a continual rapture. Those accesses of intellectual passion, those ardors of intellectual love, which come but seldom to most men, and usually in the maturity of their powers, were to him an habitual experience almost from the cradle. This it was that made him say, "The child is father of the man;" this explains such passages as the following in the ode on "The Intimations of Immortality," which else might sound like mere mysticism: —

> "Not in entire forgetfulness,
> Nor yet in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
> From God, who is our home.
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy;
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;

> The youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended;
> At length the man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."

His whole being was moulded in a singularly perfect balance; the "sound mind in the sound body" was never more strikingly exemplified than in him. To keen senses acting in a healthy and hardy frame, he joined the warmest moral emotions and the most extended moral sympathies, together with a synthesis of the finest intellectual faculties, crowned by the gift of an imagination the most vivid and the most penetrating. This imagination he himself regarded as the royal faculty, by which he was to achieve whatever it was given him to do, calling it —

> "But another name for absolute power
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood." [1]

Born on the edge of a mountain district, he had been familiar from the first with all that is lovely and all that is awful in the aspects of nature. Deep and tender sympathies bound him always to the lot of his fellow-creatures, especially the poor and the simple; unceasing reflection was his delight, and, as it were, one of the conditions of his existence. It was therefore upon no vacant or sluggish mind that the cry of revolutionary France burst, in her hour of regeneration. He was less shaken than others, because he had already seen in his reveries the possibility of better things for human society than it had yet attained to, better than even the Revolution promised to provide: —

[1] The Prelude, conclusion.

> "If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
> Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
> In part lay here, — that unto me the events
> Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,
> A gift that was come rather late than soon." [1]

He visited France immediately after leaving Cambridge in 1792, and remained there above a year. At Orleans he formed an intimacy with an officer of Girondist opinions, who afterwards, as Gen. Beaupuis, fell in battle with the royalists near the Loire: —

> "He on his part, accoutred for the worst,
> He perished fighting, in supreme command,
> Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire,
> For liberty, against deluded men,
> His fellow-countrymen; and yet most blessed
> In this, that he the fate of later times
> Lived not to see, nor what we now behold,
> Who have as ardent hearts as he had then." [2]

With Beaupuis the poet talked over the oppressions of the old *régime*, and speculated hopefully on the new model of a regenerated society, which an uprisen people, whose natural virtues would be now free to exert themselves and find the career which they required, was about to exhibit to the world. Yet even in that hour of elation Wordsworth was saddened by the sight of an untenanted and roofless convent: —

> "In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,
> In spite of real fervor, and of that
> Less genuine and wrought up within myself,
> I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
> And for the matin-bell to sound no more
> Grieved, and the twilight taper, and the cross,
> High on the topmost pinnacle." [3]

Compelled to return to England in 1793, he repaired ere long to his beloved mountains, and in the same year

[1] The Prelude, book ix. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

produced his first work, containing the "Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches taken during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps,"—poems in which echoes of Pope, Goldsmith, and Crabbe are more apparent than any very decided indications of genius. At this period, England joined in the war against France; and Wordsworth's moral nature—the whole frame of his aspirations and sympathies—received a rude shock. He was even meditating a return to France, and the devotion of all his energies to political action. Perplexed and disappointed, he was in some danger of becoming permanently soured and morose. But from this state his admirable sister, who was now become his constant companion, raised him, and drew him gently towards the true and destined path for his footsteps,—the vocation of a poet:—

> "She whispered still that brightness would return;
> She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
> A poet, made me seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, my office upon earth." [1]

But neither the brother nor the sister had at this time any patrimony. This want, however, was supplied in a singular way, at the very moment when it began to be urgent, by the bequest of a young friend of the name of Calvert, whom Wordsworth had tenderly nursed through the last weeks of a decline. This was in 1794; and the pair, accustomed to the austere simplicity and plain fare of the North, lived contentedly upon this bequest (which did not exceed nine hundred pounds) for eight or nine years. In 1802, when this resource was nearly exhausted, the succession of a new Lord Lonsdale brought with it the payment of their patrimony, long unjustly withheld. Wordsworth then

[1] The Prelude, book xi.

married, and settled at Grasmere. During this period his poetry, as De Quincey says, was "trampled upon;" and he had no other permanent resource for a livelihood. But in 1807 he received from Lord Lonsdale the appointment of distributor of stamps for the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and was set free thenceforward from pecuniary anxieties. Shelley, in his "Peter Bell the Third," sneers at Wordsworth as a pensioner bought over by the Tories; but the taunt was false and groundless. Some few persons in England were wise enough to see that Wordsworth's function in this world was to write, and at the same time happy enough to have it in their power to say to him, "Write, and you shall be fed." Among these few were Calvert and Lord Lonsdale. It is hard to see how Wordsworth's mental and moral independence was more compromisd by accepting an office from the lord lieutenant of his county than was Shelley's by his deriving his income from landed property, the secure tenure of which depended upon the repression of Jacobinical projects at home and abroad.

In 1798 appeared "The Lyrical Ballads," to which a few pieces were contributed by Coleridge and Southey. Again, in 1800 and 1807, collections of detached poems appeared; and in 1814 was published "The Excursion." This is the second part of a larger poem, which was to have been entitled "The Recluse," and to have been in three parts. The third part was only planned; of the first, only one book was ever written. A long poem in fourteen books, called "The Prelude," written in 1804, was not given to the world till 1850. It contains a history of the growth and workings of the poet's mind, up to "the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labor which he had proposed to himself,"

that, namely, of "constructing a literary work that might live," a philosophical poem containing views of man, nature, and society. This great work, the storehouse of his deepest and wisest thoughts, the author himself compared to a Gothic church, the "Prelude" to the ante-chapel of this church, and all his minor poems to "the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses ordinarily included in such edifices."

Of the general plan of this sublime composition, I must try to give the outline. In the first book the poet meets the "Wanderer," a Scotch peddler, who, having by hard work earned enough to make him independent of his trade, wanders continually from place to place, feeding his contemplative spirit on the varied physical aspects, or moral themes, which nature and human life supply. The Wanderer conducts him to the remote valley, where dwells the "Solitary," a man who after having lived some years with an adored wife and two children, and then seen them die before his eyes; having perplexed his brain with a thousand jarring tenets of religion and philosophy; having hailed with rapture the revolution in France, and groaned over the repression of the manifold activities which it had elicited by the hard hand of military power, — now in cynical despondency, unsocial and friendless, longs for the hour of death: —

> "Such a stream
> Is human life; and so the spirit fares
> In the best quiet to her course allowed;
> And such is mine, save only for a hope
> That my particular current soon will reach
> The unfathomable gulf, where all is still."

In the fourth book, "Despondency Corrected," the Wanderer, with the true eloquence of a noble enthusiasm, endeavors to remove the morbid hopelessness of his friend by unfolding his views of the immense poten-

tiality for good which every human existence, not utterly corrupted, contains within itself; by enlarging on the blessings which, in every age and every land, religious hope, and even, were no better thing obtainable, superstitious reverence, have bestowed upon men, — blessings more real than any which modern science (apt to be blind to the higher while keenly conscious of the lower truth) confers on its disciples; lastly, by pointing out the practical courses and methods of discipline which, in his judgment, lead to the perfection of the individual being. The beautiful ideal of human perfection here presented to us differs from that which we find in the pages of the New Testament perhaps only in this, that it implies an *intellectual* activity and culture possible only to the few, and must therefore forever be unattainable by those unequal, imperfectly balanced characters who constitute, nevertheless, the chief portion of mankind. To such characters, Christianity alone opens out the means of reaching the highest grade of perfection compatible with their nature.

In the later books, from the fifth to the ninth inclusive, the chief figure is that of the "Pastor," who relates to the personages already introduced numerous anecdotes drawn from the experience of his mountain parish. Among these is the story of "Wonderful Walker," the good pastor of Seathwaite in the Vale of Duddon, which parish he held for sixty-six years.

Among Wordsworth's minor poems I will mention, as especially characteristic of his genius, "Laodamia," "Matthew," "The Primrose of the Rock," "The Solitary Reaper," "The Evening Voluntaries," the sonnets on the River Duddon, and "Yarrow Unvisited."

Moore, though of humble parentage, was enabled by his own striking talents, and by the self-denying and intelligent exertions of his excellent mother, to receive

and profit by the best education that was to be obtained in his native Ireland. He went up to London in 1799, to study for the bar, with little money in his purse, but furnished with an introduction to Lord Moira, and with the manuscript of his translation of Anacreon. Through Lord Moira he was presented to the Prince Regent, and permitted to dedicate his translation to him. The work appeared, and of course delighted the gay and jovial circle at Carlton House. Moore thus obtained the requisite start in London society; and his own wit and social tact accomplished the rest. Through Lord Moira's interest he was appointed, in 1803, to the registrarship of the Bermudas. But he could not long endure the solitude and storms of the "vexed Bermoothes;" and, leaving his office to be discharged by a deputy, he returned, after a tour in the United States, to England. Some of his prettiest lyrics, e.g., "The Indian Bark," and "The Lake of the Dismal Swamp," are memorials of the American journey. In the poems of "Corruption," "Intolerance," and "The Sceptic," published in 1808 and 1809, he tried his hand at moral satire, in imitation of Pope. But the *rôle* of a *censor morum* was ill suited to the cheerful, convivial temper of Tom Moore; and, though there are plenty of witty and stinging lines in these satires,[1] they achieved no great success.

He found at all times his most abundant source of inspiration in the thought of his suffering country, whose sorrows he lamented in many a lovely elegy, and whose oppression he denounced in many a noble lyric. Even in that poem which, as a work of art, must be regarded as his masterpiece, — I mean "Lalla Rookh,"

[1] For instance: —

"But bees, on flowers alighting, cease their hum:
So, settling upon places, Whigs grow dumb."

a work in which the reader is transported to the palaces of Delhi and the gardens of Cashmere, — Moore himself tells us that he vainly strove, in several abortive attempts, to rise to the height of his own original conception, until the thought struck him of embodying in his poem a sketch of the history of the Ghebers or fire-worshippers of Persia, a persecuted race, who, like the Irish, had preserved the faith of their forefathers through centuries of oppression, and whose nationality had never been wholly crushed out by Moslem rule. "Lalla Rookh" (1817) consists of four tales, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," "Paradise and the Peri,"[1] "The Fire-Worshippers," and "The Light of the Harem." A slight thread of prose narrative, gracefully and wittily told, connects them, inasmuch as they are all recited by Feramorz, a young poet of Cashmere, for the entertainment of Lalla Rookh, daughter of the Emperor Aurungzebe, while she is journeying from Delhi to Cashmere to wed her affianced lord, the prince of Bucharia. Fadladeen, the chamberlain of the princess's household, criticises each poem after it has been recited, in a very lively and slashing manner. As a political satirist, Moore, on the Liberal side, was quite as cutting as, and far more copious than, Canning or Frere or Maginn on the Tory side. His "Political Epistles" are of various dates. Among them is the far-famed "Epistle of the Prince Regent to the Duke of York," in which the "first gentleman in Europe" is made to say, partly in his own very words, —

> "I am proud to declare I have no predilections;
> And my heart is a sieve, where some scattered affections
> Are just danced about for a moment or two,
> And, the *finer* they are, the more sure to run through."

[1] See p. 395.

"The Fudge Family in Paris" (1818), and "Fables for the Holy Alliance" (1819), were designed to stem the tide of re-action, which, after the end of the great war, threatened to replace the throne and the altar in their old despotic supremacy. "The Twopenny Post-bag," a collection of imaginary intercepted letters, put into verse, in one of which there is a playful hit at Walter Scott, who had just published "Rokeby," dates from 1813. But all that was highest and purest in Moore's nature is best seen in his "Irish Melodies" (1807–34), in which he appears as the true Tyrtæus of his beloved Ireland. His "Sacred Songs" (1816) are less interesting. In his later years Moore took to prose writing; compiled the "Life of Sheridan" (1825), and the "Life and Letters of Lord Byron" (1830); and also produced "The Epicurean," a "History of Ireland," the "Memoirs of Captain Rock," and "The "Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion." His mind, like Southey's, was gone for several years before his death, which occurred in 1852.

Thomas Hood was a man of rare powers. Pathos, sensibility, indignation against wrong, enthusiasm for human improvement — all these were his; but the refracting medium of his intelligence was so peculiarly constituted, that he could seldom express his feelings except through witty and humorous forms. However gravely the sentence begins, you know that you will probably have to hold your sides before it is ended. The following well-known stanza is really a type of his genius: —

"Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan
To cure the dark and erring mind;
But who would rush at a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind?"

His first work was "Whims and Oddities," followed by the "Comic Annual," commenced in 1830, and "Up the Rhine" (1838). The wonderful "Song of the Shirt" (1843) was nearly his last effort. He died of a chronic disease of the lungs in 1845. His works have been published in a collective form within the last few years.

From the long roll of minor poets, the publication of whose works falls within the first half of the century, I select a few names.

Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," wrote "The Queen's Wake" (1813), which, says Mr. Chambers, "consists of a collection of tales and ballads supposed to be sung to Mary Queen of Scots by the native bards of Scotland, assembled at a royal wake at Holyrood." Mrs. Hemans published in 1828 "Records of Women," and afterwards, "National Lyrics," "Scenes and Hymns of Life," and other works. Many of her songs are instinct with genuine feeling, and breathe a thrilling music. Miss Landon, once so widely known as L. E. L., is the authoress of "The Improvisatrice," "The Lost Pleiad," and a multitude of other lyrics now seldom read. James and Horace Smith were the authors of the "Rejected Addresses" (1812), a collection of parodies of the style of the principal living poets. Those on Crabbe, Byron, and Southey are especially telling. A copious didactic vein is exhibited in the moral poems of James Montgomery, author of "Greenland" (1819), "The Pelican Island," and other poems. Robert Pollok's "Course of Time" (1827), however feeble and faulty as a poem, was so exactly adapted to the level of culture in the religious classes of Scotland, that it obtained an extraordinary popularity, having passed through more than twenty editions. It consists of ten books of blank verse: the subjects handled are much the same as those met with in Young's "Night Thoughts." Kirke White's few poems were for a time made famous through the publication of his "Remains" by Southey, soon after his death in 1806. The small posthumous volume of poems by Bishop Heber contains, besides his Oxford prize poem of "Palestine," several good hymns and elegantly turned lyrics.

The Drama, 1800–1850: Byron, Sheridan Knowles, Joanna Baillie.

During the present century the stage, considered as a field for literary energy, has greatly declined even below the point at which it stood a hundred years ago. Why this is so, it would not be easy to explain; but there is no doubt as to the fact that the dramas written by men of genius within the last sixty years have generally proved ill adapted for the stage, while the authors of the successful plays have not been men of genius. "The Doom of Devergoil and Auchindrane" by Scott, the tragedy of "Remorse" by Coleridge, that of "The

Cenci" by Shelley, Godwin's play of "Antonio," and Miss Edgeworth's "Comic Dramas," were all dramatic failures: either they were originally unsuited for the modern stage, or, when produced upon it, obtained little or no success. On the other hand, the "Virginius," "The Hunchback," "The Wife," &c., of Sheridan Knowles, the farces of O'Keefe, and the comedies of Morton and Reynolds, being, it would seem, better adapted to the temper, taste, and capacity of the play-going public than the works of greater men, brought success and popularity to their authors. The "Manfred" of Lord Byron, published as "a dramatic poem" (1817), was no more intended for the stage than Goethe's "Faust," by which it was evidently suggested. Of "Cain," and "Heaven and Earth," published as "mysteries," the same may be said. On the other hand, the tragedies of "Sardanapalus" and "Marino Faliero" were designed to be acting plays. The plays of Joanna Baillie, intended to be illustrative of the stronger passions of the mind, appeared between 1798 and 1836. Two or three of them only were brought on the stage, and were but coldly received, being deficient in those various and vivid hues of reality which assimilate a drama to the experience of life.

Prose-Writers, 1800–1850.

We can give only the briefest summary of what has been done in the principal departments of prose writing during this period. In prose fiction, besides the Waverley novels, which have been already noticed, must be specified Jane Austen's admirable tales of common life, — "Pride and Prejudice,"[1] "Mansfield Park," "Northanger Abbey," &c., — which their beautiful and too short-lived authoress commenced as a sort of protest

[1] See p. 463.

against the romantic and extravagant nonsense of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels; and Miss Edgeworth's hardly less admirable stories of Irish life and character. In oratory, though this period falls far below that which preceded it, we may name the speeches of Canning, Sheil, O'Connell, and Sir Robert Peel. In political writing and pamphleteering, the chief names are, William Cobbett, with his strong sense and English heartiness, author of "The Englishman's Register;" Scott, whose political squib, the "Letters of Malachi Malagrowther," had the effect of arresting the progress of a measure upon which the ministry had resolved; Southey; and Sydney Smith. In journalism, the present period witnessed the growth of a great and vital change, whereby the most influential portion of a newspaper is no longer, as it was in the days of Junius, the columns containing the letters of well-informed correspondents, but the leading articles representing the opinions of the newspaper itself. In prose satire, the inexhaustible yet kindly wit of Sydney Smith has furnished us with some incomparable productions; witness "Peter Plymley's Letters,"[1] his articles on Christianity in Hindostan, and his letter to "The Times" on Pennsylvanian repudiation. In history, we have the Greek histories of Mitford, Thirlwall, and Grote, the unfinished Roman history of Arnold,[2] the English histories of Lingard and Hallam, and the work similarly named (though "History of the Revolution, and of the Reign of William III.," would be an exacter title) by Lord Macaulay. Mr. Hallam's "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages" (1818) gave a stimulus to historical research in more than one field which for ages had been, whether arrogantly or ignorantly, overlooked. In biography, out of a countless array of

[1] See p. 470. [2] See p. 489.

works, may be particularized the lives of Scott, Wilberforce, and Arnold, compiled respectively by Lockhart, the brothers Archdeacon Wilberforce and the Bishop of Oxford, and Dr. Stanley. As to the other works subsidiary to history, such as accounts of voyages and travels, their name is Legion; yet perhaps none of their authors has achieved a literary distinction comparable to that which was conferred on Lamartine by his "Voyage en Orient." In theology, we have the works of Robert Hall and Rowland Hill, representing the Dissenting and Low Church sections; those of Arnold, Whately, and Hampden, representing what are sometimes called Broad Church, or Liberal, opinions; those of Froude, Pusey, Davison, Keble, Sewell, &c., representing various sections of the great High Church party; and, lastly, those of Milner, Dr. Doyle, — the incomparable "J. K. L.," — Wiseman, and Newman, on the side of the Roman Catholics. In philosophy, we have the metaphysical fragments of Coleridge, the ethical philosophy of Bentham, the logic of Whately and Mill, and the political economy of the last-mentioned writers, and also Ricardo and Harriet Martineau. Among the essay-writers must be singled out Charles Lamb, author of the "Essays of Elia," which appeared in 1823. In other departments of thought and theory, e.g., criticism, we have the literary criticism of Hazlitt and Thackeray, and the art-criticism of Mr. Ruskin.[1]

[1] Much of the additional matter contained in this and the preceding chapter has been taken, with the consent of the publisher, Mr. Murby of Bouverie Street, from the author's Chaucer to Wordsworth: a Short History of English Literature.

CRITICAL SECTION.

CHAPTER I.

POETRY.

Definition of Literature, Classification of Poetical Compositions.

ENGLISH LITERATURE is now to be considered under that which is its most natural and legitimate arrangement; that arrangement, namely, of which the principle is not sequence in time, but affinity in subject; and which aims, by comparing together works of the same kind, to arrive, with greater ease and certainty than is possible by the chronological method, at a just estimate of their relative merits. To effect this critical aim, it is evident that a classification of the works which compose a literature is an essential pre-requisite. This we shall now proceed to do. With the critical process, for which the proposed classification is to serve as the foundation, we shall, in the present work, be able to make but scanty progress. Some portions of it we shall attempt, with the view rather of illustrating the conveniences of the method, than of seriously undertaking to fill in the vast outline which will be furnished by the classification.

First of all, what is literature? In the most extended sense of the word, it may be taken for the whole written thought of man; and, in the same acceptation, a national

literature is the whole written thought of a particular nation. But this definition is too wide for our present purpose: it would include such books as "Fearne on Contingent Remainders," and such periodicals as "The Lancet" or "The Shipping Gazette." If the student of literature were called upon to examine the stores of thought and knowledge which the different professions have collected and published, each for the use of its own members, his task would be endless. We must abstract, therefore, all works addressed, owing to the speciality of their subject-matter, to particular classes of men; e.g., law books, medical books, works on moral theology, rubrical works, &c.; in short, all strictly professional literature. Again: the above definition would include all scientific works, which would be practically inconvenient, and would tend to obscure the really marked distinction that exists between literature and science. We must further abstract, therefore, all works in which the words are used as ciphers or signs for the purpose of communicating objective truth, not as organs of the writer's personality. All strictly scientific works are thus excluded. In popularized science, exemplified by such books as "The Architecture of the Heavens," or "The Vestiges of the Natural History of the Creation," the personal element comes into play: such books are, therefore, rightly classed as literature. What remains after these deductions is literature in the strict or narrower sense; that is, the assemblage of those works which are neither addressed to particular classes, nor use words merely as the signs of *things*, but which, treating of subjects that interest man as man, and using words as the vehicles and exponents of *thoughts*, appeal to the general human intellect and to the common human heart.

Literature, thus defined, may be divided into, —

1. Poetry.
2. Prose writings.

For the present, we shall confine our attention to poetry. The subject is so vast as not to be easily manageable; and many of the different kinds slide into each other by such insensible gradations, that any classification must be to a certain extent arbitrary: still the following division may perhaps be found useful. Poetry may be classed under eleven designations: 1, epic; 2, dramatic; 3, heroic; 4, narrative; 5, didactic; 6, satirical and humorous; 7, descriptive and pastoral; 8, lyrical (including ballads and sonnets); 9, elegiac; 10, epistles; 11, miscellaneous poems; the latter class including all those pieces (very numerous in modern times) which cannot be conveniently referred to any of the former heads, but which we shall endeavor further to subdivide upon some rational principle.

Epic Poetry: "Paradise Lost," Minor Epic Poems.

The epic poem has ever been regarded as in its nature the most noble of all poetic performances. Its essential properties were laid down by Aristotle in the Poetics, more than two thousand years ago, and they have not varied since; for, as Pope says, —

> "These rules of old, discovered, not devised,
> Are nature still, but nature methodized."

The subject of the epic poem must be some one great complex action. The principal personages must belong to the high places of society, and must be grand and elevated in their ideas. The measure must be of a sonorous dignity, befitting the subject. The action is developed by a mixture of dialogue, soliloquy, and narrative. Briefly to express its main requisites, the epic poem treats of one great complex action, in a grand style, and with fulness of detail.

English literature possesses one great epic poem, — Milton's "Paradise Lost." Not a few of our poets have wooed the epic Muse; and the results are seen in such poems as Cowley's "Davideis," Blackmore's "Prince Arthur," Glover's "Leonidas," and Wilkie's "Epigoniad." But these productions do not deserve a serious examination. The "Leonidas," which is in blank verse, possesses a certain rhetorical dignity, but has not enough of variety and poetic truth to interest deeply any but juvenile readers. Pope's translation of the "Iliad" may in a certain sense be called an English epic; for, while it would be vain to seek in it for the true Homeric spirit and manner, the translator has, in compensation, adorned it with many excellences of his own. It abounds with passages which notably illustrate Pope's best qualities, — his wonderful intellectual vigor, his terseness, brilliancy, and ingenuity. But we shall have other and better opportunities of noticing these characteristics of that great poet.

The first regular criticism on the "Paradise Lost" is found in "The Spectator," in a series of articles written by Addison. Addison compares Milton's poem to the "Iliad" and the "Æneid," first with respect to the choice of subject, secondly to the mode of treatment; and in both particulars he gives the palm to Milton.

Dr. Johnson, in his "Life of Milton," speaks in more discriminating terms: —

"The defects and faults of 'Paradise Lost' (for faults and defects every work of man must have), it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman

can take delight in transcribing passages which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honor of our country?"

Coleridge, in his "Literary Remains," gives a criticism of the "Paradise Lost," parts of which are valuable. He appears to rank Milton as an epic poet above Homer and above Dante. Lastly, Mr. Hallam, in his "History of European Literature," while he does not fail to point out several defects in "Paradise Lost," which Addison and other critics had overlooked, yet inclines to place the poem, as a whole, above the "Divina Commedia" of Dante.

In our examination of the poem, we shall consider, 1, the choice of subject; 2, the artistic structure of the work; 3, details in the mode of treatment, whether relating to personages, or events, or poetical scenery; 4, the style, metre, and language of the poem.

1. With regard to the choice of subject, it has been repeatedly commended in the highest terms. Coleridge, for instance, says, "In Homer, the supposed importance of the subject, as the first effort of confederated Greece, is an after-thought of the critics; and the interest, such as it is, derived from the events themselves, as distinguished from the manner of representing them, is very languid to all but Greeks. It is a Greek poem. The superiority of the 'Paradise Lost' is obvious in this respect, that the interest transcends the limits of a nation."

There cannot, of course, be two opinions with regard to the importance and universal interest of the subject of the "Paradise Lost," considered in itself; but whether it is a surpassingly good subject for an epic poem, is a different question. One obvious difficulty connected with it is its brevity, and deficiency in inci-

dent: it is not sufficiently *complex*. Compare the subjects chosen by Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. The wrath of Achilles, its causes, its consequences, its implacability in spite of the most urgent entreaties, its final appeasement, and the partial reparation of the calamities to which it had led, form one entire whole, the development of which admits of an inexhaustible variety in the management of the details. Similarly, the settlement of Æneas in Italy, involving an account, by way of episode, in the second and third books of the "Æneid," of the circumstances under which he had been driven from Troy, with a description of the obstacles which were interposed to that settlement, whether by divine or human agency, and of the means by which these obstacles were finally overcome, and the end foreshadowed from the commencement attained, — this subject again, though forming one whole, and capable of being embraced in a single complex conception, presents an indefinite number of parts and incidents suitable for poetic treatment. In both cases, tradition supplied the poet with a large original stock of materials; upon which, again, his imagination was free to re-act, and either invent, modify, or suppress, according to the requirements of his art. In Tasso's great epic, the subject of which is the triumphant conclusion of the first crusade, and the deliverance of Jerusalem from the unbelievers, the materials are evidently so abundant that the poet's skill has to be exercised in selection, rather than in expansion. Now, let us see how the case stands with regard to Milton's subject. Here the materials consist of the first three chapters in the Book of Genesis, and a few verses in the Apocalypse; there is absolutely nothing more. But it may be said, that as Tasso has invented many incidents, and Virgil also, so Milton had full liberty to

amplify, out of the resources of his own imagination, the brief and simple notices by which Scripture conveys the narrative of the fall of man. Here, however, his subject hampers him, and rightly so. The subjects taken by Virgil and Tasso fall within the range of ordinary human experience; whatever they might invent, therefore, in addition to the materials which they had to their hands, provided it were conceived with true poetic feeling, and were of a piece with the other portions of the poem, would be strictly homogeneous with the entire subject-matter. But the nature of Milton's subject did not allow him this liberty of amplification and expansion. That which is recorded of the fall of man forms a unique chapter in history; all experience presents us with nothing like it; and the danger is, lest if we add any thing of our own to the narration — so brief, so apparently simple, yet withal so profoundly mysterious — which is presented to us in Holy Writ, we at last, without intending it, produce something quite unlike our original. Whether Milton has succeeded in avoiding this danger, is a point which we shall consider presently; but that he felt the difficulty is clear, for he has avoided as much as possible inventing any new incident, and, to gain the length required for an epic poem, has introduced numerous long dialogues and descriptive passages.

2. The internal structure of this poem, as a work of art, has been admired by more than one distinguished critic. There is, Coleridge observes, a *totality* observable in the "Paradise Lost:" it has a definite beginning, middle, and end, such as few other epic poems can boast of. The first line of the poem speaks of the disobedience of our first parents; the evil power which led them to disobey is then referred to; and the circumstances of its revolt and overthrow are

briefly given. The steps by which Satan proceeds on his mission of temptation are described in the second and third books. In the fourth, Adam and Eve are first introduced. Part of the fifth, the sixth, seventh, and eighth books are episodical, and contain the story in detail of the war in heaven between the good and the rebel angels, the final overthrow and expulsion of the latter, and the creation of the earth and man. All this is related to Adam by the angel Raphael, to serve him by way of warning, lest he also should fall into the sin of disobedience and revolt. In the ninth book occurs the account of the actual transgression. In the tenth we have the sentence pronounced, and some of the immediate consequences of the fall described. The greater part of the eleventh and twelfth books is another episode, being the unfolding to Adam, by the archangel Michael, partly in vision, partly by way of narrative, of the future fortunes of his descendants. At the end of the twelfth book we have the expulsion of Adam and Eve out of Paradise, with which the poem naturally closes.

"The Paradise Lost" thus forms one connected whole; and it is worked out with great vigor and carefulness of treatment throughout. Many passages, especially at the beginnings of the books, have a character of unsurpassed dignity and sublimity; the language, though often rough or harsh, and sometimes grammatically faulty, is never feeble or wordy; and a varied learning supplies the poet with abundant material for simile and illustration. Still the difficulty before mentioned, as inherent in the choice of the subject, seems to extend its evil influence over the structure of the poem. The fact of his materials being so scanty, obliged Milton to have recourse to episodes; hence the long narratives of Raphael and Michael. Through

nearly six entire books, out of the twelve of which the poem is composed, the main action is interrupted and in suspense, — a thing which it is difficult to justify upon any rules of poetic art. For what is an episode? It is a story within a story; it is to an epic poem what a parenthesis is to a sentence; and just as a parenthesis, unless carefully managed and kept within narrow limits, is likely to obscure the meaning of the main sentence, so an episode, if too long, or unskilfully dovetailed into the rest of the work, is apt to introduce a certain confusion into an epic poem. Let us observe the manner in which the father of poetry, — he who, in the words of Horace, —

"Nil molitur inepte," —

of whom Pope says,[1] —

"Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring," —

Let us see how far Homer indulged in episode. The use of the episode is twofold: it serves either to make known to the reader events antecedent or subsequent in time to the action of the piece, or to describe contemporary matters which, though connected with, are not essential to, and do not help forward, the main action. A long narrative of what is past, and a long prophecy of what is to come, are therefore both alike episodical. Of the former we have an example in the second and third books of the "Æneid;" of the latter, in the eleventh and twelfth books of the "Paradise Lost." As an instance of the contemporary episode, we may take the story of Olinda and Sofronio, in the second canto of the "Gerusalemme Liberata." Now Homer, although in the "Iliad" he informs us of many

[1] Essay on Criticism, i.

circumstances connected with the siege of Troy, which had happened before the date when the poem commences, seems purposely to avoid communicating them in a formal episode. He scatters and interweaves these notices of past events in the progress of the main action so naturally, yet with such perfection of art, that he gains the same object which is the pretext for historical episodes with other poets, but without that interruption and suspension of the main design, which, however skilfully managed, seems hardly consistent with equal perfection. Thus Achilles, in the long speech in the ninth book, to the envoys who are entreating him to succor the defeated Greeks, introduces, without effort, an account of much of the previous history of the great siege. So again Diomede, in the second book, when dissuading the Greeks from embarking and returning home, refers naturally to the events which occurred at Aulis before the expedition started, in a few lines, which, as it were, present to us the whole theory of the siege in the clearest light. Homer, therefore, strictly speaking, avoids in the "Iliad" the use of the episode altogether. Virgil, on the other hand, adopts it; the second and third books of the "Æneid" are an episodical narrative, in which Æneas relates to Dido the closing scenes at Troy, and his own subsequent adventures in the Mediterranean. Tasso uses the episode very sparingly, and prefers the contemporary to the historical form. But, when we come to the "Paradise Lost," we find that nearly half the poem is episodical. Several disadvantages hence arise. First of all, the fact implies a defect in point of art; since the action or story developed either in a dramatic or an epic poem ought to be so important, and so complete in itself, as not to require the introduction of explanatory or decorative statements nearly as long as the progres-

sive portions of the poem. If the episode be explanatory, it proves that the story is not sufficiently clear, simple, and complete for epic purposes; if decorative, that it is not important enough to engross the reader's attention without the addition of extraneous matter. In either case, the art is defective. Again, this arrangement is the source of confusion and obscurity. A reader not very well acquainted with the peculiar structure of the poem, opens the "Paradise Lost" at hazard, and finds himself, to his astonishment, — in a work whose subject is the loss of Paradise, — carried back to the creation of light, or forward to the building of the tower of Babel.

3. We are now to consider in some detail, how Milton has treated his subject, how he has dealt with the difficulties which seem inherent in the selection. A certain degree of amplification — the materials being so scanty — was unavoidable: has he managed the amplification successfully? In some instances he certainly has; for example, in the account of the temptation of Eve, in the ninth book, the logic of which is very ingeniously wrought out by supposing the serpent to ascribe his power of speech and newly awakened intelligence to the effects of partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and by putting into his mouth various plausible arguments designed to satisfy Eve as to the motives of divine prohibition. But in other passages we cannot but think that the amplification has been most unsuccessful. For example, take the war in heaven. In the Apocalypse (chap. xii.) it is mentioned in these few words: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent,

who is called the Devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world: and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Such, and no more than this, was the knowledge imparted in prophetic vision to the inspired apostle in Patmos, regarding these supernatural events. Milton has expanded this brief text marvellously: the narrative of the revolt and war in heaven takes up two entire books. And strange work indeed he has made of it! The actual, material swords and spears; the invention of cannons, cannon-balls, and gunpowder by the rebel angels; the grim Puritanical pleasantry which is put in the mouth of Satan when first making proof of this notable discovery, just such as one might fancy issuing from the lips of Cromwell or Ireton on giving orders to batter down a cathedral; the hurling of mountains at one another by the adverse hosts, a conceit borrowed from Greek mythology and the war of the Titans against the gods, —

> "Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
> Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum;"

lastly, the vivid description, exceedingly fine and poetical in its way, of the chariot of the Messiah going forth to battle, drawn by four cherubic shapes, — all this, though fitting and appropriate enough if the subject were the gods of Olympus or of Valhalla, grates discordantly upon our feelings when it is presented as a suitable picture of the mysterious event which we call the fall of the angels, and as an expansion of the particulars recorded in the sacred text. In truth, Milton is nowhere so solemn and impressive as in those passages where he reproduces almost *verbatim* the exact words of Scripture; e.g., in the passage in the tenth book, describing the judgment passed upon man after his transgression. Where he gives the freest

play to his invention, the result is least happy. The dialogues in heaven, to say nothing of the undisguised Arianism which disfigures them, are either painful or simply absurd, according as one regards them seriously or not. Pope, whose discernment nothing escaped, has touched this weak point in his "Imitations of Horace." [1] Hallam himself has admitted that a certain grossness and materialism attach to Milton's heaven and heavenly inhabitants, far unlike the pure and ethereal colors with which Dante invests the angels and blessed spirits presented in his "Paradiso."

Turning now to the personal element in the poem, we find, as Johnson shows at length, that, as the subject chosen is beyond the sphere of human experience, so the characters described are deficient in human interest. So far as this is not the case, it arises from Milton having broken through the trammels which the fundamental conditions of his subject imposed on him. Of all the personages in the "Paradise Lost," there is none whose proceedings interest us, and even whose sufferings engage our sympathies, like those of Satan. But this is because he is not represented as the Bible represents him, — namely, as the type and essential principle of all that is evil and hateful. There seems to be a conflict in the mind of Milton between the Scriptural type of Satan, and the Greek conception of Prometheus. The fallen archangel, driven from heaven and doomed to everlasting misery by superior power, yet with will unconquered and unconquerable, cannot but recall the image of the mighty Titan chained to the rock by the vengeance of Jove, yet unalterably defiant and erect in soul. It is clear that the character of Satan had greater charms for Milton's imagination, and is therefore presented more prominently, and worked out with

[1] "In quibbles angel and archangel join," &c.

more care, than any other in the poem. Devoted, himself, to the cause of insurrection on earth, he sympathizes against his will with the author of rebellion in heaven, — against his will; for he seems to be well aware, and to be continually reminding himself, that Satan ought to be represented as purely evil: yet he constantly places language in his mouth which is inconsistent with such a conception. For instance: —

> "Yet not for those,
> Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
> Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
> Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind
> And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
> That with the Mightiest urged me to contend."

Is not this much more like Shelley's Prometheus than the Satan of the Bible? It has been often said, and it seems true, that the hero or prominent character of the "Paradise Lost" is Satan. Throughout the first three books the attention is fixed upon his proceedings. Even after Adam and Eve are introduced, which is not till the fourth book, the main interest centres upon him; for they are passive, he is active; they are the subject of plots, he the framer of them; they, living on without any definite aim, are represented as falling from their happy state through weakness, and in a sort of helpless predestined manner (we speak, of course, of Milton's representation only, not of the fall as it was in itself); while he is fixed to one object, fertile in expedients, courageous in danger, and, on the whole, successful in his enterprise. Clearly Satan is the hero of the "Paradise Lost." And, apart from the incongruity referred to, the character is drawn in such grand outlines, and presents such a massive strength and sublimity, as none but a poet could have portrayed. The following lines describe him, when marshalling the hosts of his followers: —

"He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet lost
All its original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so yet shone
Above them all the archangel."

He consoles himself for his banishment from heaven with reflections worthy of a Stoic philosopher: —

"Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! Hail,
Infernal world! And thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor, — one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, — all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free: the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence.
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."

In much of the portraiture of Adam, Milton seems to be unconsciously describing himself. His manly beauty, his imperious claim to absolute rule over the weaker sex, the grasp of his intellect, and the delight he feels in its exercise, his strength of will, yet susceptibility to the influence of female charms, — all these characteristics, assigned by the poet to Adam, are well known to have in an eminent degree belonged to himself. Eve, on the other hand, is represented as a soft, yielding, fascinating being, who, with all her attrac-

tions, is, in moral and intellectual things, rather a hinderance than a help to her nobler consort; and there are many suppressed taunts and thinly veiled allusions, which, while they illustrate Milton's contempt for the sex, and somewhat Oriental view of woman's relation to man, can scarcely be misunderstood as glancing at his own domestic trials. To illustrate what has been said, we will quote a few passages. The first is one of surpassing beauty: —

"Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honor clad,
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all;
And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone:
. . . . . .
For contemplation he and valor formed;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him:
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad." — *Book* iv.

Eve thus unfolds her conception of the relation in which she stands to Adam: —

"To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned: —
'My author and disposer, what thou bidst
Unargued I obey: so God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.'" — *Ibid.*

Adam, while expressing the same view, owns the invincibility of woman's charm: —

"For well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her the inferior, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel;
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given

O'er other creatures; yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows." — *Book* viii.

Even in the fall, his superior intellect asserts itself: —

"He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm." — *Book* ix.

Is there not, again, a touch of autobiography in the reproaches which Adam heaps upon Eve in the following lines? —

"This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall, — innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And straight conjunction with this sex; for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse," &c. — *Book* x.

Eve's beautiful submission makes her stern lord relent. It is well known that Milton's first wife, in similar suppliant guise, appeased his resentment, and obtained her pardon: —

"She ended weeping; and her lowly plight
Immovable, till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration; soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress." — *Ibid.*

The seraph Abdiel is one of the grandest of poetic creations. Led away at first in the ranks of the rebel angels, he recoils with horror when he learns the full

scope of their revolt, and returns to the courts of heaven: —

> " So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
> Among the faithless, faithful only he;
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
> Nor number nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
> Though single. From amidst them forth he passed
> Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
> Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
> And, with retorted scorn, his back he turned
> On those proud towers to swift destruction doomed. — *Book* v.

By *poetical scenery* is meant the imaginary framework in space in which the poem is set, — the stage, with its accessories, on which the characters move, and the action is performed. In the " Paradise Lost," as in the " Divina Commedia," this is no narrower than the entire compass of the heavens and the earth. But there is a remarkable difference between them, which, in point of art, operates to the disadvantage of the English poet. In the fourteenth century no one doubted the truth of the Ptolemaic system ; and Dante's astronomy is as stable and self-consistent as his theology. The earth is motionless at the centre; round it, fixed in concentric spheres, revolve the " seven planets," of which the moon is the first, and the sun the fourth: enclosing these follow in succession the sphere of the fixed stars, that of the empyrean, and that described as the *primum mobile.* The geography of the Inferno, an abyss in the form of an inverted cone, extending downwards in successive steps to the centre of the earth, and that of the Purgatorio, a mountain at the Antipodes, rising in the form of a proper cone by similar steps, till the summit is reached whence purified souls

are admitted to the lowest sphere of the Paradiso, are equally logical and distinct. But in the seventeenth century the Copernican system was rapidly gaining the belief of all intelligent men; and Milton, in his poem, wavers between the old astronomy and the new. In the first three books the Ptolemaic system prevails: upon any other, Satan's expedition in search of the new-created earth becomes unintelligible. After struggling through chaos, he lands upon the outermost of the spheres that enclose the earth: —

> "Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe
> Of this round world, whose first convex divides
> The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed
> From chaos and the inroad of darkness old,
> Satan alighted walks." — *Book* iii.

Hither "fly all things transitory and vain;" hither come the "eremites and friars" whom Milton regards with true Puritanic aversion, and those who thought to make sure of Paradise by putting on the Franciscan or Dominican habit on their death-bed: —

> "They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
> And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
> The trepidation talked, and that first moved."

On his way down from hence to the earth, Satan, still in accordance with the Ptolemaic system, passes through the fixed stars, and visits the sun. But in subsequent parts of the poem an astronomy is suggested which revolutionizes the face of the universe, and gives us the uncomfortable feeling that all that has gone before is unreal. The stability of the earth is first questioned in the fourth book: —

> "Uriel to his charge
> Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
> Bore him slope downward to the sun, now fallen

Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal, *or this less volúbil earth,*
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there."

In the eighth book, Adam questions Raphael as to the celestial motions, but is doubtfully answered: upon either theory, he is told, the goodness and wisdom of God can be justified; yet the archangel's words imply some preference for the Copernican system: —

"What if the sun
Be centre to the world, and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
. . . . . .
Or save the sun his labor, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night; *which needs not thy belief,*
If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun's beam meet night."

4. It remains to say a few words upon the style, metre, and language of the poem. The grandeur, pregnancy, and nobleness of the first are indisputable. It is, however, often rugged or harsh, owing to the frequency of defects in the versification. It is distinguished by the great length of the sentences: the thread of thought winding on through many a parenthesis or subordinate clause, now involving, now evolving itself, yet always firmly grasped, and resulting in grammar as sound as the intellectual conception is distinct. This quality of style is perhaps attributable to Milton's blindness: he could not write down as he composed, nor could an amanuensis be always at hand; he therefore may have acted on the principle that one long sentence is more easily remembered than two or three short ones.

A series of admirable papers upon Milton's versification may be found in Johnson's "Rambler." To it the reader is referred, the subject being not of a kind to admit of cursory treatment.

The language of the poem does not come up to the standard of the purest English writers of the period. It is difficult to understand how Milton, having the works of Bacon, Shakspeare, and Hooker before him, could think himself justified in using the strange and barbarous Latinisms which disfigure the "Paradise Lost." Such terms as "procinct," "battallious," "parle," and such usages, or rather usurpations, of words, as "frequent" in the sense of "crowded," "pontifical" in the sense of "bridge-making," "obvious" for "meeting," "dissipation" for "dispersion," and "pretended" for "drawn before" (Latin *prætentus*), were never employed by English writers before Milton, and have never been employed since.

Nor does he import Latin words only, but Latin and even Greek constructions. Examples of Greek idioms are, "And knew not eating death," and "O miserable of happy" (*ἄθλιος ἐκ μακαρίου*). Latin idioms occur frequently, and sometimes cause obscurity, because, through the absence of inflections in English, the same collocation of words which is perfectly clear in Latin is often capable of two or three different meanings in English. A few examples are subjoined: "Or hear'st thou rather" (i.e., wouldst thou rather be addressed as) "pure ethereal stream;" "Of pure, now purer air meets his approach;" "So as not either to provoke, or dread new war provoked" (where it is not clear at first sight, whether "provoked" should be rendered by "*suscitatum*," or "*lacessitos*"); "How camest thou speakable of mute," &c.

After all, it is easy to be hypercritical in these mat-

ters. The defence, however, of such a minute analysis lies in the fact of its being exercised on a work truly great. We notice the flaws in a diamond, because it is a diamond. No one would take the trouble to point out the grammatical or metrical slips in Blackmore's "Creation." It is from the conviction that the renown of the "Paradise Lost" is, and deserves to be, imperishable, that critics do not fear to show that it is wrong to regard it with a blind, indiscriminate admiration. Of the father of poetry himself it was said, —

"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus."

In a note are given a few passages from the poem, which have passed into proverbs, current sayings, or standard quotations.[1]

Dramatic Poetry. — Its kinds: Shakspeare, Addison, Milton.

Invented by the Greeks, the drama attained in their hands a perfection which it has never since surpassed. To them we owe the designation of tragedy and comedy, the definitions of each kind according to its nature and end, and the division into acts. The leading characteristics of dramatic composition have remained un-

[1] "Awake, arise, or be forever fallen."

"With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded."

"At whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads."

"Not to know me, argues yourselves unknown."

"Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and *fit audience find, though few.*"

"With a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy red."

"And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike."

altered ever since; but the Greek definition of tragedy was gradually restricted, that of comedy enlarged, so that it became necessary to invent other names for intermediate or inferior kinds. With the Greeks, a tragedy meant "the representation of a serious, complete, and important action," and might involve a transition from calamity to prosperity, as well as from prosperity to calamity.[1] By a comedy was meant a representation, tending to excite laughter, of mean and ridiculous actions. Thus the "Eumenides" of Æschylus, the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, and the "Alcestis," "Helena," and others of Euripides, though called tragedies, do not end *tragically* in the modern sense, but the reverse. But by degrees it came to be considered that every tragedy must have a disastrous catastrophe, so that a new term, "tragi-comedy," — which seems to have first arisen in Spain, — was invented to suit those dramas in which, though the main action was serious, the conclusion was happy. As tragedy assumed a narrower meaning, comedy obtained one proportionably more extensive. Of this a notable illustration is found in Dante, who though he did not understand by the "tragic style" what we understand by it, but merely the style of grand and sublime poems such as the "Æneid," yet named his own great work "La Commedia," as intending to rank it with a great variety of poems in the middle or ordinary style, not sublime enough to be tragic, and not pathetic enough to be elegiac. In England the term "comedy" was used all through the Elizabethan age in a loose sense, which would embrace any thing between a tragi-comedy and a farce. Thus "The Merchant of Venice" is reckoned among the comedies of Shakspeare, though, except for the admixture of comic matter in the minor characters, it is, in the Greek sense, just as much a

[1] Aristotle, Poet. 6.

tragedy as the "Alcestis." In the seventeenth century, the term began to be restricted to plays in which comic or satirical matter preponderated. A shorter and more unpretending species, in one or at most two acts, in which any sort of contrivance or trick was permissible in order to raise a laugh, so that the action were not taken out of the sphere of real life, was invented, under the name of "farce," in the eighteenth century.

The best and most characteristic of English plays belong to what is called the *romantic* drama. The classical and the romantic drama represent two prevalent modes of thought, or streams of opinion, which, parting from each other and becoming strongly contrasted soon after the revival of letters, have ever since contended for the empire of the human mind in Europe. The readers of Mr. Ruskin's striking books will have learnt a great deal about these modes of thought, and will, perhaps, have imbibed too unqualified a dislike for the one, and reverence for the other. Referring those who desire a full exposition to the pages of that eloquent writer, we must be content with saying here, that the classical drama was cast in the Græco-Roman mould, and subjected to the rules of construction (the dramatic unities) which the ancient dramatists observed; its authors being generally men who were deeply imbued with the classical spirit, to a degree which made them recoil with aversion and contempt from the spirit and the products of the ages that had intervened between themselves and the antiquity which they loved. On the other hand, the romantic drama, though it borrowed much of its formal part (e. g., the division into acts, the prologue and epilogue, the occasional choruses, &c.) from the ancients, was founded upon and grew out of the romance literature of the middle ages; its authors being generally imbued with

the spirit of Christian Europe, such as the mingled influences of Christianity and feudalism had formed it. National before all; writing for audiences in whom taste and fine intelligence were scantily developed, but in whom imagination and feeling were strong, and faith habitual, — the dramatists of this school were led to reject the strict rules of which Athenian culture exacted the observance. To gratify the national pride of their hearers, they dramatized large portions of their past history, and in so doing scrupled not to violate the unity of action. They observed, indeed, this rule in their tragedies, at least in the best of them, but utterly disregarded the minor unities of time and place, because they knew that they could trust to the imagination of their hearers to supply any shortcomings in the external illusion. In the play of "Macbeth" many years elapse, and the scene is shifted from Scotland to England and back again without the smallest hesitation. The result is, that art gains in one way, and loses in another. We are spared the tedious narratives which are rendered necessary in the classical drama by the strict limits of time within which the action is bounded. On the other hand, the impression produced, being less concentrated, is usually feebler and less determinate.

It would be a waste of time to enter here, in that cursory way which alone our limits would allow, into any critical discussion of the dramatic genius of Shakspeare. The greatest modern critics in all countries have undertaken the task, a fact sufficient of itself to dispense us from the attempt. Among the numerous treatises, large and small, — by Coleridge, Hazlitt, Mrs. Jameson, Guizot, Tieck, Schlegel, Ulrici, &c., — each containing much that is valuable, we would single out Guizot's as embodying, in the most compact and convenient form, the results of the highest criticism on Shakspeare himself, on his time, and on his work.

Our literature possesses but few dramas of the classical school, and those not of the highest order. The most celebrated specimen, perhaps, is Addison's "Cato." But weak and prosaic lines abound in it, such as, —

"Cato, I've orders to expostulate;"

or, —

"Why will you rive my heart with such expressions?"

and the scenes between the lovers are stiff and frigid. Yet the play is not without fine passages; as when the noble Roman, who has borne unmoved the tidings of the death of his son, weeps over the anticipated ruin of his country: —

"'Tis Rome requires our tears;
The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
And set the nations free, — Rome is no more!"

On the whole, Cato's character is finely drawn, and well adapted to call forth the powers of a first-rate actor. His soliloquy at the end, beginning, —

"It must be so: Plato, thou reasonest well," &c.

has been justly praised.

Milton's "Samson Agonistes" is constructed upon the model of a Greek tragedy. The choral parts are written in an irregular metre, which, however, is full of harmony. Though not suited for representation before an average audience, and though the labored, compressed diction, while it everywhere recalls the great mind of Milton, deviates from any objective standard of beautiful expression, this play is one of those which continually rise upon our judgment. In it the genius of Handel has inseparably linked itself, in our conceptions, with the verse of Milton.

Heroic and Mock-Heroic Poetry: "The Bruce," "The Campaign," "Rape of the Lock."

As the unity of the epic poem is derived from its being the evolution of one great complex action, so the unity of the heroic poem proceeds from its being the record of all or some of the great actions of an individual hero. Like the epic, it requires a serious and dignified form of expression; and consequently, in English, employs nearly always either the heroic couplet, or a stanza of not less than seven lines. Heroic poetry has produced no works of extraordinary merit in any literature. When the hero is living, the registration of his exploits is apt to become fulsome; when dead, tedious. Boileau has perhaps succeeded best; the heroic poems which Addison produced in honor of Marlborough and William III., in hope to emulate the author of the "Epître au Roi," are mere rant and fustian in comparison. Our earliest heroic poem, "The Bruce of Barbour," [1] is, perhaps, the best; but the short romance metre in which it is written much injures its effect. A better specimen of Barbour's style cannot be selected than the often-quoted passage on freedom: —

"A! fredome is a noble thing!
Fredome mayss man to have liking:
Fredome all solace to man givis;
He livys at ease, that freely livys!
A noble hart may have none ease,
Na ellys nocht that may him please,
Gif fredome failyhe; for fre liking
Is yharnyt [2] ower all other thing.
Na he, that aye has livyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrtè,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,[3]
That is couplyt to foul thyrldome.[4]
Bot gif he had assayit it,
Then all perquer [5] he suld it wyt;

[1] See p. 40. [2] Yearned for. [3] Wretched doom. [4] Thraldom. [5] Perfectly.

And suld think fredome mar to pryss,
Than all the gold in warld that is.
Thus contrar thingis ever mar,
Discoweryngis of the tothir are[1]
And he that thryll[2] is, has nocht his:
All that he has embandownyt is
Till[3] his lord, quhat evir he be,
Yet has he nocht sa mekill fre
As fre wyl to live, or do
That at hys hart hym drawis to."

Addison's heroic poem, "The Campaign," contains the well-known simile of the angel, which called forth the admiration and munificence of Godolphin. The story runs as follows: In 1704, shortly after the battle of Blenheim, Godolphin, then lord treasurer, happening to meet Lord Halifax, complained that the great victory had not been properly celebrated in verse, and inquired if he knew of any poet to whom this important task could be safely intrusted. Halifax replied that he did indeed know of a gentleman thoroughly competent to discharge this duty, but that the individual he referred to had received of late such scanty recognition of his talents and patriotism, that he doubted if he would be willing to undertake it. Lord Godolphin replied that Lord Halifax might rest assured, that whoever might be named should not go unrewarded for his trouble. Upon which, Halifax named Addison. Godolphin sent a common friend to Addison, who immediately undertook to confer immortality on the Duke of Marlborough. The poem called "The Campaign" was the result. Godolphin saw the manuscript when the poet had got as far as the once celebrated simile of the angel, which runs thus: —

"So when an angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,

[1] Meaning, "explain their opposites." [2] Thrall. [3] To.

Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast,
And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

Lord Godolphin, it is said,[1] was so delighted with this not very reverent simile, that he immediately made Addison a commissioner of appeals. But this favorable judgment of the poem has been reversed by later criticism. "The Campaign," taken as a whole, is turgid yet feeble, pretentious yet dull; it has few of the excellences, and nearly all the faults, which heroic verse can have.

With the heroic we may class its travesty, the mock-heroic. And here the inimitable poem of "The Rape of the Lock" will occur to every one; in which Pope, with admirable skill, and perfect mastery over all the resources of literary art, has created an artistic whole, faultless no less in proportion and keeping than in the finish of the parts, which, in its kind, remains unapproached by any thing in English, and probably in European, literature. The slight incident on which the poem was founded is well known. Among the triflers who fluttered round the sovereign at Hampton Court,

"Where thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea,"

were Belinda (Miss Arabella Fermor), and the Baron (Lord Petre). Small-talk, badinage, flirtation, scandal, —

"At every word a reputation dies," —

are insufficient to fill the vacant hours; and for these "idle hands" some mischief is soon found to do. The Baron, borrowing a pair of scissors from one of the

[1] See the Biographia Britannica.

maids of honor, Clarissa, audaciously cuts off one of the two curling locks of Belinda's back hair: —

"Just then Clarissa drew, with tempting grace,
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bent her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair;
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair!
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought,
As, on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched the ideas rising in her mind;
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide,
To enclose the lock; now joins it to divide.
Even then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain:
(But airy substance soon unites again).
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head forever and forever."

The liberty was resented by the lady; and a breach between the two families was the result, in the hope of healing which Pope wrote this poem. So far the real nearly coincided with the fictitious facts. But Pope, unwilling to leave the matter in an unsettled and indeterminate state, — an error which Dryden did not avoid in the "Absalom and Achitophel," — contrived, with the happiest art, to crown the incident with a poetically just and satisfying conclusion. The insulted and enraged Belinda commands her beau, Sir Plume, —

"Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane," —

to extort the lock from the Baron. He makes the attempt, but in vain. The two parties now muster their forces, and engage in deadly strife; these to keep, those to win back, the lock. Belinda, through the dexterous application of a pinch of snuff, has the Baron at her mercy; and the lock is to be restored. But, lo! it has vanished, and is hunted for everywhere in vain. Many theories are framed to account for its disappearance; but the poet was privileged to see it wafted upwards to the skies, where, transformed into a comet sweeping by with "a radiant trail of hair," the lover takes it for Venus, and the astrologer for some baleful luminary, foreshowing —

"The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome."

Lightness, grace, airy wit, playful rallying, every thing, in short, that is most alien to the ordinary characteristics of the English intellect, are found in this poem. It is a keen, sunny satire, without a spark of ill-nature, on the luxury and vanity of a society impregnated with ideas borrowed from the court of the Grand Monarque, from classical revivals, and Renaissance modes of thought. It may be noted that the continual association of contrasted ideas is one of the chief sources of the wit with which the poem flashes and runs over, as with lambent flames of summer lightning. Belinda's guardian sylph cannot discover the nature of the danger which threatens her, —

"Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honor, or her new brocade;
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade."

So, again, —

> "The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,
> And the long labors of the toilet cease."

And, —

> "Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast
> When husbands, or when lapdogs, breathe their last."

The trivial is raised to the rank of the important, and, as it were, confounded with it, that both may appear as so much plastic material in the hand of the master. This is the very triumph of art.

Narrative Poetry: Romances, Tales, Allegories, Romantic Poems, Historical Poems.

Narrative poetry is less determinate in form than any of the preceding kinds. The narrative poem so far resembles the epic, that it also is concerned with a particular sequence of human actions, and permits of the intermixture of dialogue and description. It differs from it in that it does not require either the strict unity or the intrinsic greatness of the epic action. In the epic, the issue of the action is involved in the fundamental circumstances, and is indicated at the very outset. The first two lines of the "Iliad" contain the germ or theme which is expanded and illustrated through the twenty-two books which follow. The course of a narrative poem is in general more like that of real life: events occur and are described which have no obvious internal relation either to each other or to some one ground plan; and a conclusion in which the mind reposes, and desires nothing beyond, — an essential requirement in the epic, — is not to be strictly exacted from the narrative poem. But, even if the epic unity of design were observed, the narrative poem

would still be distinguishable from the higher kind, either by the inferior greatness of the subject, or by the lower quality of the style. An epic poem, as was said before, treats of one great complex action, in a lofty style, and with fulness of detail. In a narrative poem, it will be invariably found that one of these elements is wanting.

It will be convenient to divide narrative poems into five classes, — 1, romances; 2, tales; 3, allegories; 4, romantic poems; 5, historical poems.

1. The *romances*, or gests, in old English, with which our manuscript repositories abound, were mostly translated or imitated from French originals during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. In the former portion of this work a general description was given of these remarkable poems, so that it is unnecessary here to enter upon any questions connected with their origin or subject-matter. We shall now present the reader with an analysis of a curious romance, not belonging to one of the great cycles, which may serve as a sample of the whole class. It is the romance of Sir Isumbras, and is one of these abridged by Ellis: —

Sir Isumbras was rich, virtuous, and happy; but in the pride of his heart he was lifted up, and gradually became forgetful of God. An angel appears to him, and denounces punishment. It is like the story of Job: his horses and oxen are struck dead, his castle burnt down, and many of his servants killed. Then, with his wife and three sons, he sets out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. On the way, the two elder children are carried off, one by a lion, the other by a leopard. At last they come to the "Greekish Sea;" a Saracen fleet sails up; the Soudan is enamoured of the wife, and deprives Sir Isumbras of her by a forced sale, the purchase-money being counted down upon the

knight's red mantle. The lady is immediately sent back to the Soudan's dominions in the capacity of queen. Shortly after this the misery of Sir Isumbras is completed by the abduction of his only remaining son by a unicorn, during a brief interval in which he was vainly pursuing an eagle which had seized upon the mantle and the gold. In fervent contrition he falls on his knees, and prays to Jesus and the Virgin. He obtains work at a smith's forge, and remains in this employment seven years, during which he forges for himself a suit of armor. A battle between a Christian and a Saracen army takes place not far off; Sir Isumbras takes part in it, and wins the battle by his valor, killing his old acquaintance the Soudan. After his wounds are healed, he takes a scrip and pike, and goes on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Here he stays seven years in constant labor, mortification, and penance; at last, —

> "Beside the burgh of Jerusalem
> He set him by a well-stream,
> Sore wepand for his sin;
> And as he sat, about midnight,
> There came an angel fair and bright,
> And brought him bread and wine:
> He said, Palmer, wel thou be:
> The King of Heaven greeteth wel thee;
> Forgiven is sin thine!"

He wanders away, and at length arrives at a fair castle belonging to a rich queen; he begs for and receives food and lodging. The queen, after a conversation with him, resolves to entertain the pious palmer in the castle. After a sojourn here of many months, Sir Isumbras finds one day in an eagle's nest his own red mantle with the Soudan's gold in it. He bears it to his chamber, and the recollections it awakens completely overpower him. He becomes so altered that the queen,

in order to ascertain the cause, has his room broken open; when the sight of the gold explains all, and mutual recognition ensues. Sir Isumbras tells his Saracen subjects that they must be forthwith converted. They, however, object to such summary measures, and rise in rebellion against him and his queen, who stand absolutely alone in the struggle. In the thick of the very unequal contest which ensues, three knights, mounted respectively on a lion, a leopard, and a unicorn, come in opportunely to the rescue; and by their aid Sir Isumbras gains a complete victory. These, of course, are his three lost sons. For each he obtains a kingdom; and, all uniting their efforts, they live to see the inhabitants of all their kingdoms converted.

> "They lived and died in good intent:
> Unto heaven their souls went,
> When that they dead were;
> Jesu Christ, Heaven's King,
> Give us aye his blessing,
> And shield us from harm!"

Such, or similar to this, is the usual form of conclusion of all the old romances, even those, as "The Seven Sages, for instance," of which the moral tone is extremely questionable.

A portion of the great romance of "Arthur" has been given to us in a modern dress by Tennyson. Few readers of poetry are unacquainted with his beautiful poem of "Morte d'Arthur," a modern rendering of the concluding part of the romance bearing that title. "The Idyls of the King" are renderings of so many particular passages or episodes in the same great romance.

The immediate source from which the laureate drew his materials was Sir Thomas Malory's compilation of "The Historie of King Arthur," made by him "out of certeyn bookes of Frensche" about

the year 1470, and printed by Caxton in 1485. This work was in prose, like the French originals from which it was taken, and was compiled from the romances of "Merlin," "Lancelot," "Tristan," the "Queste du St. Grall," and the "Mort Artus." [1]

2. *Tales* form the second class of narrative poems. The tale is a poem in which, as a general rule, the agencies are natural; in which the chief interest lies in the story itself, and the manner in which it is unfolded, not in the style, or language, or peculiar humor of the author; lastly, in which neither is the action on a large scale, nor are the chief actors great personages. The earliest, and still by far the best collection of such tales which English literature possesses, is the "Canterbury Tales" of Chaucer. In connection with this work, we shall endeavor to draw out in some detail the proofs which it affords of the solidity and originality of Chaucer's genius.

In every great writer there is a purely personal element, and there is also a social element. By the first, which is also the highest in kind, he is what he is, and soars freely in the empyrean of creative imagination; by the second, he is connected with and modified by the society in which he moves, the writers whom he follows or admires, and even the physical characters of the spot of earth where he resides. It is chiefly under these latter relations that we propose to consider the genius of Chaucer.

The English society in which he moved was already far beyond those comparatively simple relations which we ascribe to the society of feudal times. In the eyes of an old romance-writer, mankind fall naturally and conveniently under these four divisions: sovereign princes, knights, churchmen, and the commonalty. For

[1] See Mr. T. Wright's edition of Sir Thomas Malory's "Historie" (1858).

this fourth, or proletarian class, he entertains a supreme contempt: he regards them as only fit to hew wood and draw water for princes and knights; and nothing delights him more than to paint the ignominious rout and promiscuous slaughter of thousands of this base-born multitude by the hand of a single favorite knight. There certainly was a time — before great cities rose to wealth and obtained franchises, when feudal castles were scattered like hail over the North of Europe, and private war was universal and incessant, — at which this picture of society had much truth in it. And, as usually happens, the literature which had sprung up under, and which was adapted only to, such a state of things, continued to be produced from the force of habit, after the face of society had become greatly altered. Shutting their eyes to the progress of things around them; overlooking, or else bewailing as an innovation and a degeneracy, the constant accumulation and growing power of wealth obtained by industry, and the consequent rise of new classes of men into social importance, — the romance-writers, as a body, continued rather to adapt their translations or original effusions to the atmosphere of the baronial hall, and to the established order of ideas in the knightly understanding, than to seek for sympathy among classes which they dreaded while affecting to despise.

But it is characteristic of genius, first, to have a profound insight into the real; then boldly to face it; lastly, by the art which is its inseparable companion, to reproduce it under appropriate forms. Thus it was with Chaucer in the England of the fourteenth century. He had no literary models to work by — in his own language at least — except the antiquated and unreal feudal portraits above referred to; but he had sympathies as large as the nature of man, a soul that could not

endure a dead form or a mere conventionality, and an intellect which arranged the human beings around him according to their qualities, — by what they were, rather than by what they were called. He felt, as Burns did, that —

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp;
> The man's the gowd for a' that."

And accordingly, in that wonderful gallery of portraits, the prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," we have the existing aspects and classes of English society described with a broad and impartial hand. The knight is indeed there, — one figure among many; nor does Chaucer, like Cervantes, present him in a ridiculous light, for knighthood in the fourteenth century was still a reality, not a piece of decayed pageantry, as in the sixteenth; but he and his order appear as what they actually were, — that is, as one element in society amongst many. They do not, as in the pages of romance, cast all other orders of laymen into the shade. Churchmen, again, are, on the whole, represented without partiality and without bitterness. There may be a tinge of Puritanism in the keenness of some of the invectives against ecclesiastical personages; but it is not more than a tinge. On the whole, Chaucer may be truly said to

> "Nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice;"

and if we have an affected prioress, a roguish friar, and a hypocritical pardoner, we have, on the other side, the clerk of Oxenford, with his solid worth and learning, and the well-known character of the good parish priest. But besides the knight, the squire, and the ecclesiastical persons, a crowd of other characters come upon the canvas, and take part in the action. There is the

Frankelein, the representative of the sturdy, hospitable, somewhat indolent English freeholder, whom, however, participation in the political and judicial system introduced by the energetic Norman had made a better and more sterling person than were his Saxon ancestors. Then we have the mixed population of cities, represented by the merchant, the man of law, the shipman, the Doctour of Physike, and the good Wife of Bath, — all from the middle classes; and by the haberdasher, the carpenter, the webbe (weaver), &c., from the lower. The inferior ranks of the rural population are represented by the ploughman, the miller, and the reve.

Viewed in this light, as a picture of contemporary society, the prologue is certainly the most valuable part of the "Canterbury Tales." And what does this picture show us? Not that distorted image which the feudal pride of the great lords, humored by the sycophancy of the minstrels, had conjured up in the romances, but the real living face of English society, such as Christianity and the mediæval Church, working now for seven centuries upon the various materials submitted to their influence, had gradually fashioned it to be. Doubtless it shows many evils, — the profanation of sacred callings, the abuse of things originally excellent, ill-repressed tendencies to sloth, luxury, and licentiousness; but it shows also a state of things in which every member of society, even the humblest, had recognized rights, and was not sunk beneath the dignity of man. We have the high and the low, the rich and the poor; but the high are not inordinately high, and the low are not debased. The cement of religion binds together the whole social fabric, causing the common sympathies of its members to predominate above the grounds of estrangement.

It might have been expected that not only the prologue, but many of the tales which are put in the

mouths of the characters there described, would be strongly illustrative of English life; but this is not the case. Chaucer, like Shakspeare, borrowed most of his stories from the various collections which he found ready to his hand; and these were not of English growth, nor was their scene laid in England. When he attempts, in imitation of Boccaccio, to invent humorous tales of his own (e.g., the "Miller's Tale," the "Friar's Tale," &c.), he falls short of his prototype; for though he is not more coarse than Boccaccio, and though his humor is matchless, we miss that keen wit and exquisite beauty of style, which, with all that there is to condemn, we cannot help admiring in the Italian writer. One or two of Chaucer's original tales are both coarse and dull. In the "Sompnour's Tale," it must be confessed, the *dénoûment* of the story is exceedingly humorous; but the joke is too broad for modern taste. The "Nonnes Prestes Tale" is also very diverting.

Among the writers to whom Chaucer was indebted, whether for ideas or materials, there were none to whom his obligations were so considerable as to the great Italians of the fourteenth century. The "Knight's Tale" is taken from Boccaccio; the "Clerke's Tale," from Petrarch; and the story of Pugilin or Ugolino, in the "Monk's Tale," is borrowed from the well-known passage in Dante. But of Chaucer it can be truly said, "Nihil quod tetigit, non ornavit." The exquisite grace and tenderness with which the story of "Patient Grizzel" is related are all his own; and the fresh, breezy air of the greenwood, which we seem to inhale in reading parts of the "Knight's Tale," betokens a Teutonic, not an Italian imagination.

Lastly, let us endeavor to trace the influence of external nature upon Chaucer's poetical development. It must be borne in mind,—indeed, Chaucer's phraseology

constantly brings the fact before us, — that to the English poet of the fourteenth century Nature was far from being the pruned, tamed, and civilized phenomenon that she was and is to the poets of this and the eighteenth century. Chaucer speaks naturally, not figuratively, of the *greenwood*, by which he means what is now called in the Australian colonies "the bush," — that is, the wild woodland country, from which the original forests have never yet been removed by the hand of man. Even in Shakspeare's time, large portions of England still fell under this category; so that he, too, could naturally sing of the "greenwood tree," and found no difficulty in describing, in "As You Like It," what an Australian would call *bush life*, — that is, life on a free earth and under a free heaven; not travelling by turnpike roads, nor haunted by the dread of trespass and its penalties, but permitting men to rove at large, and, in Shakspeare's phrase, "to fleet the time carelessly as in the golden world." This condition of external nature gives a largeness and freshness to the poetry which arises under it; the scent of the woods and the song of the birds seem to hang about the verse, and "sanctify the numbers."

But, again, observe the eminent healthiness, the well-balanced stability, of Chaucer's mind. He is no sickly naturalist; he does not turn with disgust from town life to "babble o' green fields;" he neither feels nor affects such a scorn or disapprobation of man and society as to be driven to take refuge in the untarnished loveliness of nature, in order to find fit materials for poetical creations. Human society, no less than external nature, is in the eyes of Chaucer beautiful and venerable: it, too, comes from the hand of God; it, too, supplies fit themes for poetry.

With Shakspeare and Spenser, but pre-eminently

with the former, the case is much the same. In Shakspeare there is none of that morbid revulsion against the crimes or littlenesses of society which drove Byron and Shelley into alienation and open revolt against it; nor, again, is there that estrangement from active life and popular movement which makes Wordsworth the poet of the fields and mountains, not of man. In the pages of the great dramatist, who truly "holds the mirror up to nature," not external only but human, we behold society in all its varied aspects, by turns repellant and attractive, yet in the main as establishing noble and dignified relations between man and man.

The following extracts are taken, — one from the "Clerke's," the other from the "Nonnes Prestes Tale." The much-enduring Grisildes is thus described: —

1.

"Among this pore folk there dwelt a man
Which that was holden porest of hem alle;
But heighe God som tyme sende can
His grace unto a litel oxe stalle.
Janicula men of that thorp him calle.
A doughter had he, fair y-nough to sight,
And Grisildes this yonge mayden hight.

But though this mayden tender were of age,
Yet in the breste of her virginite
Ther was enclosed ripe and sad corrage;
And in gret reverence and charite
Hir olde pore fader fostered sche:
A few scheep, spynnyng, on the fold sche kept,
Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slept.

And whanne sche com hom sche wolde brynge
Wortis and other herbis tymes ofte,
The which sche shred and seth[1] for her lyvyng,
And made hir bed ful hard, and nothing softe.
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte,[2]

[1] Boiled.

[2] Kept on lofte, i.e., sustained, up-*lift*-ed; from the Anglo-Saxon *lyft*, air.

With every obeissance and diligence,
That child may do to fadres reverence."

The confusion in the poor widow's household, after the fox has carried off her cock Chaunticleere, is thus humorously described: —

"The sely wydow, and hir doughtres two,
Herden these hennys crie and maken wo,
And out at dores starte thay anon,
And saw the fox toward the wood is gone,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
They criden 'Out! harrow and wayleway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him thay ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
And Malkin with a distaff in hir hond;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the veray hogges,
So were they fered for berkyng of the dogges,
And schowting of the men and wymmen eke,
Thay ronne that thay thought hir herte breke,
Thay yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle;[1]
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve came the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*
Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meynie,[2]
Ne maden schoutes never half so schrille,
Whan that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox."

To whatever period of our literature we may turn, a multitude of tales present themselves for review. Gower's "Confessio Amantis" is in great part composed of them, the materials being taken from the "Gesta Romanorum," or from collections of French *fabliaux*. Dryden's so-called "Fables" are merely translations or modernizations of tales by Ovid, Chaucer, and Boccaccio. "The Knight's Tale," or "Pala-

[1] Kill. [2] Band or retinue.

mon and Arcite," and the "Nun's Priest's Tale," are those which he selected from Chaucer. Falconer's "Shipwreck," a popular poem in its day, is hardly worth quoting from. The smooth and sounding verse betrays the careful student of Pope; but there is no force of imagination, no depth or lucidity of intellect.

Crabbe's Tales show great narrative and dramatic skill, and contain some pathetic passages. Perhaps in all of them the moral is pointed with too much pains; the amiable writer had never felt that the true worth of poetry transcends any set didactic purpose.

> "Oh! to what uses shall we put
> The wild wood-flower that simply blows?
> And is there any moral shut
> Within the bosom of the rose?"[1]

Parnell's "Hermit," a didactic tale, contains the famous blunder — real or apparent — which Boswell solemnly submitted for Johnson's critical opinion. It occurs in the following lines: —

> "To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
> To find if books *and* swains reported right;
> For yet *by swains alone* the world he knew,
> Whose feet came wandering o'er the nightly dew."

3. *Allegories.* — According to the etymology of the word, "allegory" means the expressing of one thing by means of another. And this may serve as a loose general definition of all allegorical writing; for it will embrace not only the personification of human qualities, which is the ordinary subject of allegory, but also the application of any material designation to a subject to which it is properly inapplicable; as when Langlande speaks of the castle of Caro, and Bunyan of the city of Destruction, and the town of Apostasy. But, in

[1] Tennyson's Fairy Princess.

addition to the general notion of medial representation above stated, the word "allegory" involves also by usage the idea of a *narrative*. It embraces two kinds: 1, allegories proper; and, 2, fables. The proper allegory has usually a didactic, but sometimes a satirical purpose; sometimes, again, it blends satire with instruction. The author of the famous allegorical satire of "Reynard the Fox" thus describes at the conclusion (we quote from Goethe's version) the didactic intention of his satire: "Let every one quickly turn himself to wisdom, shun vice, and honor virtue. This is the sense of the poem; in which the poet has mingled fables and truth, that you may be able to discern good from evil, and to value wisdom, that also the buyers of this book may from the course of the world receive daily instruction. For so are things constituted; so will they continue; and thus ends our poem of Reynard's nature and actions. May the Lord help us to eternal glory! Amen."

In Langlande's allegorical "Vision of Piers Plowman," the satirical purpose so preponderates, that we have thought it best to class the work under the head of Satire. The great majority of the allegorical poems of our early writers have didactic aims more or less definite. Chaucer's beautiful allegory of the "Flower and the Leaf" has the following symbolical meaning, as Speght in his argument expresses it: "They which honor the flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure; but they that honor the leaf, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and enduring qualities, without regard of worldly respects." The following extract is from the concluding portion of the poem:—

" 'Now, faire Madame,' quoth I,
'If I durst aske, what is the cause and why,
That knightes have the ensigne of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the floure?'

'Soothly, doughter,' quod she, "this is the trouth:—
For knightes ever should be persevering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
Fro wele to better in all manner thinge;
In signe of which, with leaves aye lastinge
They be rewarded after their degre,
Whose lusty green may not appaired be,

But aye keping their beautè fresh and greene;
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, winde nor frostes kene;
Wherefore they have this property and grace.
And for the floure, within a little space
Wol they be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no grievance may endure.' "

The allegorical works of Lydgate and Hawes have not sufficient merit to require special notice. Some account of Dunbar's and Lyndsay's allegories was given in our notice of those poets:[1] an extract from "The Thistle and the Rose" is subjoined:—

"Than callit scho all flouris that grow on field,
Discryving all their fassiouns and effeirs;
Upon the awful THRISSILL scho beheld,
And saw him keipit with a busche of speiris;
Considering him so able for the weiris,
A radius crown of rubeis scho him gaif,
And said, In field go forth, and fend the laif.[2]

And, sen thou art a king, thou be discreit;
Herb without vertew thou hold nocht of sic pryce,
As herb of vertew and of odour sweit;
And lat no nettil vyle and full of vyce
Hir fallow[3] to the goodly flour-de-lyce:
Nor lat no wyld weid full of churlicheness,
Compair hir till the lilleis nobilness:

[1] See pp. 55, 57. [2] Defend the rest. [3] Join herself.

Nor hald no udir flour in sic denty
As the fresche Rois, of cullour reid and quhyt;
For gif thou dois, hurt is thyne honesty,
Considering that no flour is so perfyt,
So full of blissful angellik bewty,
Imperiall birth, honour, and dignite."

We pass on to the great allegorical masterpiece of the Elizabethan period, — Spenser's "Faerie Queen." In this poem, the Gothic or romantic spirit is even yet more decisively in the ascendent than in the plays of Shakspeare, although under the correction of the finer feeling for art which the Renaissance had awakened. Its great length causes it to be little read at the present day; and yet a true lover of poetry, when once he has taken the book up, will find it difficult to lay it down. The richness of the imagery, the stately beauty of the style, above all, that nameless and indescribable charm which a work of true genius always bears about it, make one forget the undeniable prolixity with which the design of the poem is worked out. It is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth; and in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which is generally prefixed to the work, the author has explained his plan: —

"The general end of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline; which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profite of the ensample, I chose the Historye of King Arthure, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former workes, and also farthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historicall; . . . by ensample of [whom] I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private Morall Vertues, as Aristotle hath devised: the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes."

After saying that he conceives Arthur to have "seen

in a dreame or vision the Faerie Queen, with whose excellent beautie ravished, he, awaking, resolved to seeke her out," he proceeds: —

"'In that Faerie Queen I mean Glory in my general intention, but in my particular, I mean the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdom in Faerie Land. And yet, in some places els, I do otherwise shadow her;' namely as the huntress Belphœbe. 'So, in the person of Prince Arthure I set forth Magnificence in particular; which Vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deed of Arthure applyable to that Vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the twelve other Vertues, I make twelve other knights the patrones for the more variety of the history.'"

Some idea of the nature of the poem, and of the depth and richness of Spenser's imagination, may be gained from the following brief analysis of the twelfth canto of the second book, which contains the "Legend of Sir Guyon, or of Temperance."

Sir Guyon, under the guidance of a palmer, is voyaging towards the Bower of Blisse, the abode of Acrasia (Intemperance). The boat has to pass between the Gulf of Greedinesse and a magnetic mountain. Escaped from these dangers, they coast by the Wandering Islands: then they run the gauntlet between a quicksand and a whirlpool. A "hideous host" of sea-monsters vainly endeavor to terrify them. Then they sail near the Bay of the Mermaids, who sing more enchantingly than the Sirens; but Guyon turns a deaf ear. At last they reach the desired land, and proceed to the Bower of Blisse. Rejecting the cup of wine tendered by the Dame Excesse, Guyon presses forward through the garden: —

"Eft soones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that might delight a dainty eare,
Such as at once might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise be heard elsewhere:

Right hard it was for wight that did it heare,
To read what manner musicke that mote bee;
For all that pleasing is to living eare
Was there consorted in one harmonie:
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

The joyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet;
Th' angelicall soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmure of the waters' fall;
The waters' fall, with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all."

Then from the lips of an unseen singer there issues an inthralling Epicurean strain: —

" The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay:
'Ah! see, whoso fayre thing dost faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day!
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee,
That fairer seemes the lesse ye see her may!
Lo! see, soon after how more bold and free
Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
Lo! see soon after how she fades and falls away!

'So passeth, in the passing of a day
Of mortall life, the leafe, the bud, the flowre;
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bowre
Of many a lady, and many a paramoure!
Gather therefore the rose whilst yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflowre;
Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equall crime.'"

But Guyon holds on his way unswervingly, and at last comes upon Acrasia, whom he seizes and binds, together with her lover, a foolish, dissipated youth with the strangely modern name of *Verdant*. Then the knight breaks down all those pleasant bowers " with vigour

pittilesse;" and the palmer turns back into their natural shape a crowd of persons whom Acrasia had, Circe-like, transformed into animals. So ends the canto.

The metre of "The Faerie Queen" was formed by Spenser from the Italian *ottava rima*, or eight-line stanza (said to have been invented by Boccaccio), by the addition of a ninth line, two syllables longer than the rest. This, however, is not the only distinction, for the internal organization of the two stanzas is widely different. That of Spenser closely resembles in this respect the Chaucerian heptastich, the essential character of both being fixed by the rhyming of the fifth line to the fourth. Strike out from the Spenserian stanza the sixth and seventh lines, rhyming respectively to the eighth and fifth, and cut off the two extra syllables in the last line, and you have at once the Chaucerian heptastich. It cannot be denied that the Spenserian is a more subtly constructed stanza than the *ottava rima;* yet, from its length, it tends to become unwieldy, and therefore requires to be managed with the utmost skill. The use of it with Spenser seems to have become a sort of second nature: when employed by others, even by so considerable a poet as Byron, it does not escape from being occasionally wearisome.

Thomson, in his "Castle of Indolence," succeeded remarkably well in imitating the roll of the Spenserian stanza. The first canto, which, as Dr. Johnson observes, "opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination," dilates with evident gusto on the pleasures of a life of indolence. Thomson himself is described in the following stanza, said to have been written by Lord Lyttleton: —

"A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems,
Who void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
On virtue still and virtue's pleasing themes
Poured forth his unpremeditated strain;

The world forsaking with a calm disdain,
Here laughed he careless in his easy seat;
Here quaffed, encircled with the joyous train,
Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet
He loathèd much to write, ne carèd to repeat."

In the second canto the haunt of "lazy luxury" is broken in upon by the "Knight of Arts and Industry," who destroys the castle, and puts to flight its inmates.

The other form of allegorical composition is the *fable* or *apologue*, in which, under the guise of things said or done by the inferior animals, tendencies in human nature are illustrated, maxims of practical wisdom enforced, and the besetting vices and inconsistencies of man exposed. Fables are short, because they are severally confined to the illustration of a single maxim or tendency, and would inculcate their moral less strikingly were the story enveloped in many words. In this kind of composition, the only considerable metrical work in our literature is Gay's Fables. The idea of versifying Æsop was taken by Gay from Lafontaine, but executed with far inferior power and grace. The following is a fair sample of the collection: —

"The Turkey and the Ant.

"In other men we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye,
Each little speck and blemish find;
To our own stronger errors blind.
A turkey, tired of common food,
Forsook the barn, and sought the wood;
Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.
'Draw near, my birds!' the mother cries:
'This hill delicious fare supplies:
Behold the busy negro race,
See millions blacken all the place!
Fear not; like me, with freedom eat;
An ant is most delightful meat.

How blessed, how envied were our life,
Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife!
But man, cursed man, on turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days.
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the savory chine;
From the low peasant to the lord,
The turkey smokes on every board.
Sure, men for gluttony are cursed,
Of the seven deadly sins the worst.'
An ant, who climbed beyond her reach,
Thus answered from the neighboring beech:—
'Ere you remark another's sin,
Bid your own conscience look within:
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor for a breakfast nations kill."

A variety of other fables and apologues in verse lie scattered over the literary field, some of which are sufficiently spirited and entertaining. Among the best of these are Mrs. Thrale's "Three Warnings," and Merrick's "Chameleon."

4. By *romantic poems*, the name assigned to the fourth subdivision of narrative poetry, we mean poems in which heroic subjects are epically treated, after the manner of the old romances of chivalry, yet in which neither the subject nor the form rises to the true dignity of the epic. Such poems are essentially the fruit of modern times and modern ideas. Between the period of the Renaissance, when the production of metrical romances ceased, and the close of the eighteenth century, the taste of European society preferred, both in art and literature, works modelled upon the masterpieces of Greek and Roman genius, and recoiled with an aversion, more or less sincere, from all that was Gothic or mediæval. In such a period, a romantic poem, had it appeared, would have been crushed by the general ridicule, or smothered under the general neglect. But, towards the close of the

eighteenth century, a re-action set in; and the romantic poems of Scott and his imitators are one among many of its fruits.

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel," the earliest of these productions (1805), exhibits the influence of the old romances much more decidedly than those of later date. Expressions and half-lines constantly occur in it, which are transferred unaltered from the older compositions; and the vivid and minute description of Branksome Hall, with which the poem opens, is exactly in the style of the graphic old Trouvères: —

"Nine and twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine and twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine and twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred.
Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall."

The popularity of the "Lay" naturally induced Scott to go on working in the same mine: "Marmion" came

out in 1808, and "The Lady of the Lake" in 1810. "Marmion," though it has fine passages, is faulty as a poem. The introductions to the cantos, addressed to six of his friends, are so long, and touch upon such a variety of topics, that the impressions they create interfere with those which the story itself is intended to produce; nor have they much intrinsic merit, if we except that to William Rose, containing the famous memorial lines on Pitt and Fox. In "The Lady of the Lake," Scott's poetical style reaches its acme. Here the romantic tale culminates: the utmost that can be expected from a kind of poetry far below the highest, and from a metre essentially inferior to the heroic, is here attained. The story is conducted with much art; the characters are interesting, the scenery glorious, the versification far less faulty than in "Marmion."

Byron's Oriental tales — "The Giaour," "The Corsair," "The Bride of Abydos," &c. — are but imitations, with changed scenery and accessories, of Scott's romantic poems, though they displaced them for a time in the public favor. But "The Lady of the Lake" will probably outlive "The Corsair," because it appeals to wider and more permanent sympathies. The young, the vehement, the restless, delight in the latter, because it reflects and glorifies to their imagination the wild disorder of their own spirits: the aged and the calm find little in it to prize or to commend. But the former poem, besides that "hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition," [1] has attractions also for the firm, even mind of manhood, and the pensiveness of age. The truth and vividness of its painting, whether of manners or of nature, delight the one; the healthy buoyancy of tone, recalling the days of its youthful vigor, pleasantly interests the other.

[1] Life of Scott: Diary.

The following extract is from the well-known Pirate's Song, with which "The Corsair" opens: —

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home.
These are our realms; no limits to their sway:
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? — not thou, luxurious slave,
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease,
Whom slumber soothes not, pleasure cannot please, —
Oh! who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense, the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way;
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And, where the feebler faint, can only feel, —
Feel to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?"

Moore's "Lalla Rookh" is also a romantic poem, more musical and more equably sustained than those of Byron, but inferior to his in force, and to Scott's both in force and nobleness. One passage we will give: it is that in which the Peri, whose admission to Paradise depends upon her finding a gift for the Deity which will be meet for his acceptance, and who has already vainly offered the heart's blood of a hero fallen in his country's defence, and the last sigh of a maiden who had sacrificed her life for her lover, finds at last the acceptable gift, in the tear of penitence shed by one who had seemed hardened in crime: —

"But, hark! the vesper-call to prayer,
As slow the orb of daylight sets,
Is rising sweetly on the air
From Syria's thousand minarets.

The boy has started from the bed
Of flowers, where he had laid his head,
And down upon the fragrant sod
  Kneels, with his forehead to the south,
Lisping the eternal name of God
  From purity's own cherub mouth,
And looking, while his hands and eyes
Are lifted to the glowing skies,
Like a stray babe of Paradise,
Just lighted on that flowery plain,
And seeking for its home again.
Oh, 'twas a sight, — that heaven, that child, —
A scene which might have well beguiled
Even haughty Eblis of a sigh
For glories lost, and peace gone by.

And how felt *he*, the wretched man
Reclining there, while memory ran
O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
Flew o'er the dark field of his life,
Nor found one sunny resting-place,
Nor brought him back one branch of grace?
'There *was* a time,' he said, in mild
Heart-humbled tones, 'thou blessed child!
When, young and haply pure as thou,
I looked and prayed like thee; but now' —
He hung his head: each nobler aim
  And hope and feeling, which had slept
From boyhood's hour, that instant came
  Fresh o'er him, and he wept — he wept!"

5. The historical poem is a metrical narrative of public events, extending over a period more or less prolonged of a nation's history. It lies open to the obvious objection, that, if the intention be merely to communicate facts, they can be more easily and clearly described in prose; if to write something poetically beautiful, the want of unity of plan, and the restraints which the historical style imposes on the imagination, must be fatal to success. Hence the rhyming chronicles of "Layamon," "Robert of Gloucester," and "Robert Manning," though interesting to the *historian* of our literature, are

of no value to the critic. In Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis," the defects of this style are less apparent, because the narrative is confined to the events of one year, and that year (1666) was rendered memorable by two great calamities, neither of which was unsusceptible of poetic treatment, — the Great Plague, and the Fire of London. Yet, after all, the "Annus Mirabilis" is a dull poem; few readers would now venture upon the interminable series of its lumbering stanzas.

Didactic Poetry: "The Hind and Panther," "Essay on Man," "Essay on Criticism," "Vanity of Human Wishes."

We have now arrived at the didactic class of poems, those, namely, in which it is the express object of the writer to inculcate some moral lesson, some religious tenet, or some philosophical opinion. Pope's "Essay on Man," Dryden's "Hind and Panther," and many other well-known poems, answer to this description.

All, or very nearly all, the Anglo-Saxon poetry composed subsequently to the introduction of Christianity, bears a didactic character. Of Cædmon, the Venerable Bede remarks, that he "never composed an idle verse;" that is to say, his poetical aims were always didactic. A large proportion also of the English poetry produced in the three centuries following the Conquest had direct instruction in view. Most of Chaucer's allegories point to some kind of moral; but the father of our poetry seems to have thought, that, when a writer desired to be purely and simply didactic, he should employ prose; for the only two of the "Canterbury Tales" which answer to that description — "The Parson's Tale on Penance," and "The Tale of Melibæus," enforcing the duty of the forgiveness of injuries — are in prose. Shakspeare never wrote a didactic poem, though there is no limit to the suggestiveness and thought-enkindling power of his preg-

nant lines. The same may be said of Milton; yet, as might be expected from the extreme earnestness of the man, a subordinate didactic purpose is often traceable, not only in the "Paradise Lost," but in the "Comus," the "Lycidas," and even the "Sonnets." The earliest regular didactic poem in the language is "The Hind and Panther" of Dryden, who, it will be remembered, was always a good and ready prose-writer, who developed his poetical talent late, and who, but for his marvellous genius for rhyme, which grew constantly with his years, would have preferred, one might fancy, prose to verse for a religious polemic, as he had preferred it twenty years before for an essay on the drama. However, we must be thankful, that, by indulging his genius in this instance, he has left us a very extraordinary specimen of metrical dialectics.

"The Hind and Panther" cannot properly be called an allegory, for over the greater portion of it there is no second meaning in reserve; the obvious sense is the only one. The interlocutors and mute personages are allegorical, and that is all. Instead of Bossuet and Burnet, we have the Hind and the Panther; but the expressions which are put in the mouths of the animals are, for the most part, precisely those which might have been put in the mouths of the divines. In the two following extracts the rival disputants are introduced to the reader: —

> "A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She feared no danger, for she knew no sin:
> Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
> And Scythian shafts; was often forced to fly,
> And doomed to death, though fated not to die."

The Independents, Quakers, Free-thinkers, Anabaptists, Socinians, and Presbyterians, are next enumerated,

under the emblems of the bear, the hare, the ape, the boar, the fox, and the wolf. The lion, whose business, as king of beasts, is to keep order in the forest, is, of course, James II. The Panther is then introduced:—

"The panther, sure the noblest next the hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey!
How can I praise or blame, and not offend,
Or how divide the frailty from the friend?
Her faults and virtues lie so mixed, that she
Not wholly stands condemned, nor wholly free.
Then, like her injured lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.
. . . . . .
If, as our dreaming Platonists report,
There could be spirits of a middle sort,
Too black for heaven, and yet too white for hell,
Who just dropped half way down, nor lower fell;
So poised, so gently she descends from high,
It seems a soft dismission from the sky."

The first two books are taken up with doctrinal discussions. The third opens with a long desultory conversation, partly on politics, partly on pending or recent theological controversies (that between Dryden and Stillingfleet, for instance), partly on church parties and the sincerity of conversions. The language put in the mouth of the hind often jars most absurdly with the gentle, magnanimous nature assigned to her; and in her sallies and rejoinders the tone of the coarse unscrupulous party-writer appears without the least disguise. This conversation is ended by the panther proposing to relate the tale of the swallows. By these birds the English Catholics are intended, who, following the foolish counsels of the martin (Father Petre, James's trusted adviser), are expelled from their nests, and perish miserably. A conversation follows on the poli-

tics of the Church of England. Viewed in the light of subsequent events, the confidence expressed by the hind in the panther's immovable adherence to her non-resistance principles excites a smile. The hind next volunteers the story of the pigeons, by whom are meant the Anglican clergy. Their ringleader, the buzzard, is a satirical sketch of Burnet, an important actor in the intrigues which brought on the Revolution. By following the buzzard's counsel, the pigeons draw down upon themselves the righteous wrath of the farmer (James II.). The poem then ends abruptly.

The most remarkable didactic poem in the language is Pope's "Essay on Man," written in 1732. Mandeville and others had recently impugned the benevolence and sanctity of the Deity by pointing out a variety of evils and imperfections in the system of things, and asserting that these were necessary to the welfare and stability of human society. This is the whole argument of "The Fable of the Bees." Pope in his Essay undertakes to "vindicate the ways of God to man." And how does he do so? *Not* — with regard to physical evil — by admitting, indeed, with the apostle, that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," but connecting its imperfect condition with the original sin and fall of moral agents; *not* — with regard to moral evil — by tracing it to man's abuse of his free will, permitted but not designed by his Creator, and to the ceaseless activity of evil spirits; *but*, by representing evil, moral as well as physical, to be a part of God's providential scheme for the government of the universe, to be, in fact, not absolutely and essentially evil, but only relatively and incidentally so: —

"All partial evil, universal good."

All this was pointed out, shortly after the appearance

of the essay, in a criticism from the pen of Crousaz, a Swiss professor. Warburton, in the commentary which he attached to a new edition of the poem in 1740, replied to the strictures of Crousaz, and with much pains and ingenuity endeavored to give an innocent meaning to all the apparently questionable passages. Ruffhead, in his Life of Pope, gives it as his opinion that Warburton completely succeeded. Johnson was more clear-sighted. In his Life of Pope, after saying that Bolingbroke supplied the poet with the principles of the Essay, he adds, "These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood." And again, "The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation which made them orthodox." But what sense but one is it possible to attach to such passages as the following? —

> "If plagues or earthquakes break not heaven's design,
> Why, then, a Borgia or a Catiline?
> Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,
> Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,
> *Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,*
> Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
> From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;
> Account for moral as for natural things:
> Why charge we heaven in those, in these acquit?
> In both, to reason right is to submit."

Evidently God is here made not the *permitter* only, but the *designer*, of moral evil. Again, —

> "Submit, in this or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear."

From this dictum, left unguarded as it is, it might be inferred that virtue, and the acting in obedience to conscience or against it, had nothing to do with man's blessedness. Again, —

"Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall."

Yet we are told, "You are of more value than many sparrows." Phenomena in the moral world are here confounded with phenomena in the natural. With God there is neither small nor great in a material sense; so far these lines convey a just lesson. But how can any thing which affects the welfare of a human soul — be it that of a "hero" or of a pauper — be measured by a standard of material greatness?

Alive to the weak points in the morality of the Essay, Pope wrote "The Universal Prayer," as a kind of compendious exposition of the meaning which he desired to be attached to it. In this he says that the Creator, —

"Binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will."

How this can be reconciled with the suggestion to —

"Account for moral as for natural things," —

Warburton never attempted to explain.

Mr. Carruthers, in his Life of Pope, speaks of this controversy as if it could have no interest for people of the present generation, who read the Essay for the sake of its brilliant rhetoric and exquisite descriptions, and do not trouble themselves about the reasoning. But, whether they are conscious of it or not, the moral tone of the poem does influence men's minds, as the use which is constantly made of certain well-known lines sufficiently demonstrates.[1] It was necessary, therefore,

[1] For instance: —

"For forms of government let fools contest:
Whate'er is best administered is best.
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.
In faith and hope mankind may disagree,
But all the world's concern is charity."

to commence our notice of the poem with this brief criticism of its general drift. We now proceed to quote one or two passages from this wonderful production, which is stamped throughout with an intellectual force which was perhaps never exceeded among the sons of men.

> "Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind:
> His soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk or milky way;
> Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
> Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
> Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
> Some happier island in the watery waste,
> Where slaves once more their native land behold,
> No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
> To be, contents his natural desire:
> He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
> But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

The optimism which is the philosophical key-note of the Essay, which Leibnitz had rendered fashionable by his "Theodicea," and Voltaire was to turn into ridicule in his "Candide," is thus summed up at the end of the first part: —

> "Submit, in this or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear;
> Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal or the mortal hour.
> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good;
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear: Whatever is, is right."

The following analysis of fame is from the fourth part: —

"What's fame? A fancied life in others' breath,
A thing beyond us, e'en before our death;
Just what you hear, you have; and what's unknown,
The same (my lord) if Tully's or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes and friends;
To all beside, as much an empty shade
As Eugene living, or a Cæsar dead;
Alike or when or where they shone or shine,
Or on the Rubicon or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod:
An honest man's the noblest work of God.
. . . . . .
All fame is foreign but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.
One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels."

"The Essay on Criticism" must also be classed among didactic poems. In it Pope lays down rules, in emulation of Horace's famous Epistle "De Arte Poetica," of Boileau's "Art de Poesie," and Roscommon's "Essay on Translated Verse," for the guidance, not of the writers, but of the critics, of poetry. The depth and sincerity of the admiration with which Pope looked up to the ancient masters of song appear from many passages of this brilliant Essay, particularly from the peroration of the first part, which, though somewhat marred by the anti-climax at the end, is replete with a nervous strength — the poet's voice quivering, as it were, with suppressed emotion, yet not less clear or musical for the weakness — which it is easier to feel than to describe.

"Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive war, and all-involving age.

See, from each clime the learned their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting pæans ring!
In praise so just let every voice be joined,
And fill the general chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days,
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honors with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
Oh! may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest, of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings from far pursues your flights,
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes),
To teach vain wits a science little known, —
To admire superior sense, and doubt their own."

Johnson's poem on the "Vanity of Human Wishes" is imitated from the tenth Satire of Juvenal. The striking passage on Hannibal ("*expende Hannibalem*," &c.) is transferred to Charles XII. of Sweden. The lines will bear quotation: —

"On what foundations stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide.
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labors tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain.
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield:
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till nought remain;
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost;
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay.
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day!

The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemned a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
But did not chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Satirical Poetry. — Moral, Personal, Political: Hall, Pope, Byron, Butler, Dryden, Churchill, Wolcot.

The didactic poet assumes the office of an educator; the satirist, that of a *censor morum*. The first has the same relation to the second which the schools of a country have to its courts of justice. One aims at forming virtue, and imparting wisdom; the other, at scourging vice, and exposing folly. According to its proper theory, satire is the lynch law of a civilized society; it reaches persons, and punishes acts, which the imperfections of legal justice would leave unchastised. But could not such persons and acts be more efficaciously influenced by warnings of a didactic nature? should they not be left to the philosopher and the divine? The satirist answers, No: there is a class of offenders so case-hardened in vanity and selfishness as to be proof against all serious admonition. To these the dictum applies, —

"Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."

The only way of shaming or deterring them is to turn the world's laugh against them; to analyze their conduct, and show it up before the public gaze as intrinsically odious and contemptible. He does not

expect thereby to effect any moral improvement in *them*, but rather to shame and deter others who might be preparing to imitate them; just as a good system of police is favorable to morality, by diminishing the tempations and the returns to wrong-doing. The satirist therefore professes a moral purpose: —

> "Hear this and tremble, *you who escape the laws;*
> Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
> Shall walk the world in credit to his grave;
> To Virtue only and her friends a friend,
> The world beside may murmur or commend." [1]

Satirical poetry is divisible into three classes, — moral, personal, and political. By the first is meant that general satire on contemporary morals and manners, of which Horace, Juvenal, and Pope furnish us with such admirable examples. Personal satires are those which are mainly directed against individuals, as Dryden's "MacFlecknoe," and "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Political satires are written in the interest of a party in the state; the most famous instance is Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel."

In purely personal satire, the chances are so small in favor of the chastisement being administered with pure impartiality and justice, that the world rightly attaches less value to it than to moral satire. The occasions when personal satire becomes really terrible are those when, in the midst of a general moral satire on prevailing vices or follies, the acts and character of individuals are introduced by way of *illustrating* the maxims that have just been enunciated. The attack then has the appearance of being unpremeditated, as if it had been simply suggested by the line of reflection into which the poet had fallen; and its effect is proportionally greater. Pope well understood this principle, as we shall presently see.

In the middle ages, moral satire generally seized upon ecclesiastical abuses. The "Land of Cockaygne" (assigned by Warton to the end of the eleventh century, but which must be at least a century later) is a satire on the indolence and gluttony into which the monastic life, when relaxed, has occasionally fallen. "The Vision of Piers Plowman" is in great part satirical, directing its attacks chiefly against the higher secular clergy.

The satires of Donne and Hall (the first of which received the honor of modernization from Pope) are too rough and harsh to have much poetical value. For a specimen of Hall's powers in this way, we take the following picture of a chaplain in a country house, at the end of the sixteenth century: —

"A gentle squire would gladly entertaine
Into his house some trencher-chapelaine,
Some willing man that might instruct his sons,
And that would stand to good conditions: —
First, that he lie upon the truckle-bed,
Whiles his young maister lieth o'er his head;
Secondly, that he do, on no default,
Ever presume to sit above the salt;
Third, that he never change his trencher twice;
Fourth, that he use all common courtesies,
Sit bare at meales, and one halfe rise and wait;
Last, that he never his younge maister beat.
. . . . . .
All these observed, he could contented be,
To give five markes and winter liverie."

Swift's satire, strong and crushing as it is, is so much the less effective, because it seems to spring, not from moral indignation, but from a misanthropical disgust at mankind. Pope excelled in satire, as in every thing else that he attempted, and must be ranked with the few really great satirists of all time. Not that his indignant denunciations were not frequently prompted by

personal pique and irritated vanity; but his fine taste usually enabled him to mask his personal feelings under the veil, more or less transparent, of a stern and stoical regard for virtue. His satirical writings in verse consist of the four "Moral Essays," in the form of epistles, addressed to several persons; the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, also called "The Prologue to the Satires," "The Imitations of Horace" (six in the heroic couplet, and two in octo-syllabics, after the manner of Swift), "The Epilogue to the Satires," and the "Dunciad." Of the moral Essays, the first, "Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men," is, till just at the close, rather descriptive than satirical. In the second, "On the Characters of Women," he dashes at once into satire. In contrast to those empty-headed, frivolous fair ones, whose "true no-meaning puzzles more than wit," he draws the celebrated character of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough: —

"But what are these to great Atossa's mind,
Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind:
Who, with herself or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth;
Shines in exposing knaves, and painting fools,
Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.

. . . . . .

Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live;
But die, and she'll adore you: then the bust
And temple rise, then fall again to dust.
Last night her lord was all that's good and great;
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robbed of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers! without one distress,
Sick of herself, through very selfishness!

Atossa, cursed with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
To heirs unknown descends the unguarded store,
Or wanders, heaven-directed, to the poor."

In the third essay, on "The Use of Riches," after the beautiful description of "The Man of Ross," who, with "five hundred pounds a year," made his beneficent influence felt in all the country round, occurs, by way of contrast, the picture of the closing scene of Charles II.'s splendid favorite, the second Duke of Buckingham: —

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
With tape-tied curtains never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies — alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim,
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love;
Or just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimic statesmen, and their merry king.
No wit to flatter left of all his store!
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more;
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends!"

Pope perhaps took up this particular character from the ambition of rivalling Dryden, who, as we shall see presently, wrote a powerful piece of satire upon Buckingham, in his "Absalom and Achitophel." The fourth essay satirizes the various kinds of bad taste, but contains no passages particularly suitable for citation.

In the epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, — one of the brightest, wittiest, and most forcible productions of the human intellect, — after lashing the minor poets of the day, all whom —

"his modest satire bade translate,
And owned that nine such poets made a Tate,"—

the poet proceeds to strike at higher game: —

"Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires:
Blessed with each talent, and each art to please
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus[1] were he?"

It would be easy to multiply extracts from the "Imitations of Horace" which follow; but we must leave the reader to study them for himself. Sketches of his own boyhood, concise but weighty criticisms on English poets, savage attacks on the objects of his hate (Lord Hervey, for instance), and noble descriptions, somewhat jarring therewith, of the ideal dignity and equity of satire, — all this and more will be found in these wonderful productions. The two which are written in the manner of Swift show a marked inferiority to the rest.

In the "Dunciad" personal satire predominates; but

[1] Addison.

there are passages of more general bearing in which Pope rises to the full height of his genius. Such a passage is the description of the approach of the empire of Dulness, at the end of the poem: —

"She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of Night primeval, and of Chaos old.
Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain his momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.

. . . . . .

See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head!
Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of metaphysic begs defence,
And metaphysic calls for aid on sense!
See mystery to mathematics fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine:
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And universal darkness buries all."

In personal satire, the main object is the exposure of an individual or individuals. Skelton's satires on Wolsey are perhaps the earliest example in our literature. Dryden's "MacFlecknoe" is an attack on Shadwell, a rival dramatist and a Whig, and therefore doubly obnoxious to the Tory laureate. Churchill's satires, though much extolled by his contemporaries, have little interest for modern readers. Gifford's "Baviad and Mæviad" is a clever satire in two parts, in the manner of Pope, on the affected poets and poetesses of the Cruscan school, so called after Della Crusca, an Italian,

the coryphæus of this namby-pamby tribe. The following extract will give an idea of its merits: —

"Lo, Della Crusca! In his closet pent,
He toils to give the crude conception vent;
Abortive thoughts, that right and wrong confound,
Truth sacrificed to letters, sense to sound,
False glare, incongruous images, combine,
And noise and nonsense clatter through the line.
'Tis done. Her house the generous Piozzi lends,
And thither summons her blue-stocking friends;
The summons her blue-stocking friends obey,
Lured by the love of poetry and tea."

In the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," Byron, with the reckless petulance of youth, held up to ridicule nearly all the poets of his day, — Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Moore, &c. In later life, however, he made ample amends for several of these attacks, to which irritation against "The Edinburgh Review," and the feeling of power, rather than any serious dislike of his brother poets, had impelled him. The point and spirit of the poem fall off after the first two hundred lines; and it becomes at last absolutely tedious. The following extracts will serve to illustrate the bold and dashing character of this satire. The first regards Southey: —

"Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
Forever reign — the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doomed the last of all thy race,
Well might triumphant genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common-sense."

The next is on Wordsworth: —

"Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,

The simple Wordsworth, — framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favorite May;
Who warns his friend to 'shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;'
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane,
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the Tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of her 'idiot boy,'
A moon-struck silly lad who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day,
So close on each pathetic point he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the 'idiot in his glory'
Conceive the bard the hero of the story."

Political satire castigates, nominally in the interest of virtue, but really in the interest of a party, the wicked or contemptible qualities of the adherents of the opposite faction. The two most notable exemplifications in our literature are Butler's "Hudibras" and Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel." The figures of Sir Hudibras and Ralpho — the one intended to represent the military Puritan, half hypocrite, half enthusiast, —

"who built his faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;"

the other meant to expose a lower type of Puritan character, in which calculating craft, assuming the mask of devotion without the reality, made its profits out of the enthusiasm of others — are satirical creations which, if not equal to Don Quixote and Sancho, can never lose their interest in the country which produced the originals.

The satirical portraits in "Absalom and Achitophel" are drawn with a masterly hand. They include the

leading statesmen and politicians of the Whig party towards the end of the reign of Charles II. The occasion of the satire was furnished by a plot, matured by the busy brain of Shaftesbury, for placing on the throne at the king's death his natural son the Duke of Monmouth, to the exclusion of his brother the Duke of York. The story of Absalom's rebellion supplied a parallel, singularly close in some respects, of which Dryden availed himself to the utmost. Absalom is the Duke of Monmouth; Achitophel, his crafty adviser, is the Earl of Shaftesbury; David stands for Charles II.; Zimri, for the Duke of Buckingham, &c. Some of the characters, though men of mark at the time, have ceased to figure in history; and the satire on them interests us but little. But the sketches of Shaftesbury, Halifax, Buckingham, and Titus Oates, derive an interest, independently of the skill and vigor of the drawing, from the historical importance of the persons represented. Shaftesbury is thus described: —

> "Of these the false Achitophel was first,
> A name to all succeeding ages curst:
> For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
> Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;"

Here follow the lines given above at p. 216; after which the poet proceeds, —

> "A daring pilot in extremity,
> Pleased with the danger when the waves went high,
> He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
> Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
> Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
> Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,
> Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
> Punish a body which he could not please,
> Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease;
> And all to leave what with his toil he won
> To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son?"

Halifax, known as the "Trimmer," who defeated the Exclusion Bill, is the subject of a few laudatory lines: —

> "Jotham, of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
> Endowed by nature, and by learning taught
> To move assemblies, who but only tried
> The worse a while, then chose the better side;
> Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too:
> So much the weight of one brave man can do."

The following sketch of the Duke of Buckingham may be compared with that by Pope (see p. 438), —

> "Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
> In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
> A man so various, that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was every thing by fits, and nothing long;
> But, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
> Blest madman, who could every hour employ
> With something new to wish or to enjoy!
> . . . . . .
> In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
> Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
> Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,
> He had his jest, and they had his estate.
> He laughed himself from court; then sought relief
> By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
> For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
> On Absalom and wise Achitophel;
> Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
> He left no faction, but of that was left."

Oates, the chief witness in the Popish plot of 1680, is the object of a long rolling fire of invectives, from which we can only extract a few lines: —

> "His memory, miraculously great,
> Could plots exceeding man's belief repeat:
> Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
> For human wit could never such devise.

Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But, where the witness failed, the prophet spoke;
Some things like visionary flight appear;
The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where,
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university."

Churchill's "Prophecy of Famine" was an unworthy attack upon the Scotch, written when the author was closely linked with the demagogue John Wilkes, and betokening his influence. The minister, Lord Bute, had given places in England to several of his countrymen; *hinc illæ lachrymæ!* There is no proper arrangement in the poem, no evidence of a concerted plan; the writer seems to have fired off his small arms just as it might happen, shooting wildly and rapidly, in the vague notion that some of the shot might hit. In the early portion of the satire, the wit consists, according to Churchill's usual manner, in the ironical ascription to the Scotch of virtues, the bad qualities opposite to which are supposed to be notoriously prominent in their national character. Two Scotch shepherds, Jockey and Sawney, are then introduced, bewailing, in alternate strophes, the sad condition of their country since the fatal day of Culloden: they are joined by the goddess Famine, who prophesies the approaching exaltation of the nation through the advent of a Scotchman (Lord Bute) to power, who will enable his countrymen to fatten upon the riches of England. The names of democracy and liberty become hateful in the mouths of Wilkes, Churchill, and Co., of whom it might truly be said, in the words of Milton, —

"License they mean when they cry liberty."

Politically and socially this middle part of the century was a dull and despicable period, in which the only objects that relieve the gloom are the genuine enthu-

siasm of Burke on the one hand, and the keen, cold, caustic good sense of Horace Walpole on the other. The allusions in Walpole's letters to Churchill's works, as they successively appeared, are full of point and truth; in fact, the whole age, in its meanness and false assumption, its hypocrisy and its corruption, is wonderfully photographed in the correspondence of that intelligent patrician, who made no fuss and endured none, who saw things just as they were, and had the gift of setting them down just as he saw them.

If it be a marked descent from Dryden to Churchill, it is a still deeper fall from Churchill to Peter Pindar. John Wolcot, a native of Devonshire, was educated by his uncle, an obscure medical practioner at Fowey, to his own profession. The natural vulgarity of his mind was never corrected, nor his irrepressible conceit ever rebuked, by the association with his betters at a university. In the society of a small country town he was an oracle, a marvel of genius; there his sallies were applauded, his ribaldry mistaken for satire, his obscenity for humor, and his low smartness for wit. It would be difficult to name a literary work exhibiting a more pitiful debasement of the human intellect than "The Lousiad," published in 1786. The backstairs tattle of the royal household had, it seems, spread a story that an animal of that description had made its appearance on the king's plate at dinner, who had ordered the heads of all the cooks and scullions to be shaved in consequence. Upon this incident, real or imaginary, Wolcot founded what he calls an heroic-comic poem in five cantos, at the end of which, in servile imitation of Pope, he makes the Zephyr transport the animal to the skies, and transform him into a planet, which is thereupon discovered by Herschel, and solemnly named "The Georgium Sidus."

It may perhaps be said, Is not Peter Pindar the English Beaumarchais? does he not, like him, turn sham greatness inside out, and demolish the superstitious awe with which privileged persons and classes are surrounded in the imaginations of the vulgar? No, he is not comparable to Beaumarchais; for Beaumarchais did a solid and necessary work, and he did not. Continental kings, before the French Revolution, however personally despicable they might be, were formidable, because the political system was despotic, because they wielded an enormous power irresponsibly, and could consign to a perpetual dungeon by their *lettres de cachet*, unless prudence restrained them, any private citizen who might offend them. Yet traditional reverence and mistaken piety surrounded these kings with a halo of majesty and sanctity in their people's eyes; he therefore who undermined this reverence, who exhibited kings and queens as just as miserable forked bipeds, just as silly, greedy, and trifling, as men and women in general, did a good and necessary work as one of the pioneers of freedom. But in England, in the eighteenth century, kings had no such powers; religious worship, thought, and its expression, were almost entirely free;[1] our political liberties were in the main secure; no king could send an Englishman to prison at his own caprice, or subject him to arbitrary taxation, or deprive him of representation in parliament. What serious harm, then, could the utmost conceivable folly, malignity, and even profligacy, in the king and the royal family do to the people at large? None whatever; there was therefore no object sufficient to justify a satire, no *dignus vindice nodus*. On the other hand, the mere fact of the Hanoverian family being seated on the throne, — however it might surround itself with German menials and wait-

[1] Of course I am not speaking of Ireland.

ing women like Madame Schwellenberg, whom Wolcot lashes with indignant patriotism, — constituted, in the eyes of every Englishman of sense, a standing protest on behalf of the sovereign right of the people to control its own destinies, and as such should have made that limited and muzzled royalty sacred from assault.

A man who wrote so much, and whose tongue, as he says of himself,[1]

> "So copious in a flux of metre,
> *Labitur et labetur*," —

could not but say a good thing occasionally. The postscript to his "Epistle to James Boswell, Esq.," being a supposed conversation between Dr. Johnson and the author, contains a well-known sally: —

P.P. "I have heard it whispered, Doctor, that, should you die before him, Mr. Boswell means to write your life."

Johnson. "Sir, he cannot mean me so irreparable an injury. Which of us shall die first, is only known to the great Disposer of events; but, were I sure that James Boswell would write *my* life, I do not know whether I would not anticipate the measure by taking *his*."

Since Dryden we have had no political satirist comparable to Moore. In "The Fudge Family in Paris," the letters of Mr. Phelim Fudge to his employer, Lord Castlereagh, are an ironical picture of European society from the point of view of the Holy Alliance. "The Parody on a Celebrated Letter" — that addressed by the Prince Regent to the Duke of York in 1812 — is a piece of cutting satire, in which every line has its open or covert sting.

Among the many shorter poems which fall under the description of political satire, none has attained greater notoriety than "Lilliburlero," or better deserved it than "The Vicar of Bray." The doggerel stanzas of the

[1] Apologetic Postscript to Ode upon Ode.

former were sung all over England about the time of the landing of William III., and are said to have contributed much to stir up the popular hatred against James. "The Vicar of Bray" is a witty narrative of the changes in political sentiment which a beneficed clergyman, whose fundamental principle it is to stick to his benefice, might be supposed to undergo between the reigns of Charles II. and George I. The first and the last stanzas are subjoined: —

"In good King Charles's golden days,
When loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous high-church man I was,
And so I got preferment.
To teach my flock I never missed,
Kings are by God appointed,
And cursed are they that do resist,
Or touch the Lord's anointed;
And this is law, &c.

. . . . . .

The illustrious house of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To them I do allegiance swear —
While they can keep possession;
For in my faith and loyalty
I never more will falter,
And George my lawful king shall be —
Until the times do alter;
And this is law, I will maintain
Until my dying day, sir,
That, whatsoever king shall reign,
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir."

Pastoral Poetry; Spenser, Brown, Pope, Shenstone.

Of the pastoral poetry of Greece, such as we have it in the exquisite "Idyls" of Theocritus, our English specimens are but a weak and pale reflection. The true pastoral brings us to the sloping brow of the hill, while the goats are browsing below; and on a rustic seat, opposite a statue of Priapus, we see the herdsmen

singing or piping, yet shunning to try their skill in the midday heats, because they fear to anger Pan, who then "rests, being a-weary, from his hunting."[1] Even Virgil's "Eclogues," graceful and musical as they are, possess but a secondary excellence: they are merely imitations of Theocritus, and do not body forth the real rural life of Italy. The only English poetry which bears the true pastoral stamp is that of Burns and other Scottish writers, and for this reason: that, like the Greek pastoral, it is founded on reality; it springs out of the actual life and manner of thought of the Scottish peasant. If it is rough-hewn and harsh in comparison with its Southern prototype, that is but saying that the Scottish peasant, though not despicably endowed, is neither intellectually nor æsthetically the equal of the Greek.

The chief pastoral poems that we have are Spenser's "Shepherd's Kalendar," Drayton's "Eclogues," Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals," and Pope's and Shenstone's "Pastorals," besides innumerable shorter pieces. It is scarcely worth while to make extracts. Browne's so-called pastorals ought rather to be classed as descriptive poems, since they are destitute of that dramatic character which the true pastoral (which is, in fact, a rudimentary drama) should always possess.

"Britannia's Pastorals" are in two books, each containing five "songs" or cantos. A thread of narrative runs through them, but does not furnish much that is interesting, either in character or in incident. The conduct of the story of Marina and her lovers is far too discursive. Each song is introduced by an "argument," as in the "Faerie Queen;" and the coloring of the whole work is strongly Spenserian. But the digressions and intercalated discussions on all sorts of matters, chiefly however, amatory, make it very tedious reading. A true feeling for natural beauty, a special love for the scenery of his native Devon, and a corresponding power of rich and picturesque description, are Browne's chief merits.

[1] Theocritus, Idyl I.

Pope, in the introduction to his "Pastorals," explained his conception of a pastoral poem, as of an ideal picture of the simplicity and virtue, the artless manners, fresh affections, and natural language of the golden age, apart alike from courtly refinements and realistic coarseness. In executing this conception he is very happy, especially in the third and fourth pastorals. Shenstone's "Pastoral Ballad" has some delicately turned phrases; we subjoin a stanza or two: —

"When forced the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt at my heart!
Yet I thought — but it might not be so —
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return."

The nymph proves faithless; and "disappointment" is the burden of the concluding part or canto of the poem: —

"Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose.
Yet time may diminish the pain:
The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,
Which I reared for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me."

Descriptive Poetry: "Polyolbion," "Cooper's Hill," "The Seasons."

This kind of poetry labors under the want of definite form and scope: it is accumulative, not organic; and consequently is avoided, or but seldom used, by the greater masters of the art. The most bulky specimen of descriptive verse that we possess is Drayton's "Polyolbion;" the most celebrated, Thomson's "Seasons."

The "Polyolbion" is a sort of British gazetteer; it describes the most noted spots or towns in every English county, with historical illustrations. The poem shows great imaginative as well as descriptive power; so that one wonders at the patient industry with which a man whose gifts qualified him for higher things must have worked out his dull task. The diction is simple and strong, and tends to the Saxon side of the language, as the following extract shows: —

"Of Albion's glorious isle, the wonders whilst I write,
The sundry varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great.
Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
The summer not too short, the winter not too long, —
What help shall I invoke to aid my Muse the while?
Thou genius of the place! this most renowned isle,
Which livedst long before the all-earth-drowning flood,
Whilst yet the earth did swarm with her gigantic brood,
Go thou before me still, thy circling shores about,
Direct my course so right, as with thy hand to show
Which way thy forests range, which way thy rivers flow,
Wise genius, by thy help that so I may descry
How thy fair mountains stand, and how thy valleys lie.

"Cooper's Hill," by Sir John Denham, has the beautiful and often-quoted passage descriptive of the Thames: —

"Thames — the most loved of all the Ocean's sons
By his old sire — to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity.
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold,
His genius and less guilty wealth to explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring;
Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
Like mothers which their infants overlay,

Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave;
No unexpected inundations spoil
The mower's hopes, nor mock the ploughman's toil;
But godlike his unwearied bounty flows;
First loves to do, then loves the good he does;
Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
But free and common as the sea, or wind,
When he, to boast or to disperse his stores,
Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
Visits the world, and, in his flying towers,
Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants;
Cities in deserts, woods in cities, plants;
So that to us no thing, no place, is strange,
While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
Oh might I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme! —
Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Of Pope's "Windsor Forest," Johnson has remarked, "The design of 'Windsor Forest' is evidently taken from 'Cooper's Hill,' with some attention to Waller's poem on 'The Park.' . . . The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, or a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems; because, as the scenes which they must exhibit successively are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shown must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than the first."

Thomson's "Seasons," a poem in blank verse, in four books, bears some resemblance, though no comparison, to Virgil's "Georgics." The descriptions of the appearances of nature, the habits of animals, and the manners of men, are generally given with truthful and vivid delineation. The more ambitious flights (if a fine panegyric on Peter the Great be excepted) — in which he paints great characters of ancient or modern story,

or philosophizes, or plays the moralist — are less successful. Even in describing nature, Thomson betrays a signal want of imagination; he saw correctly what was before him, the outward shows of things, but never had a glimpse of—

> "The light that never *was* on sea or land,
> The inspiration, and the poet's dream."

There are passages from which the author might be set down as a pantheist; but poets are often inconsistent; and, as Pope disclaimed the fatalism which seems to be taught by the "Essay on Man," so Thomson might have declined to father the pantheism which seems to pervade the following lines, if expressed in sober prose: —

> "What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
> That in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
> Instructs the fowls of heaven, and through their breast
> These arts of love diffuses? — what but God?
> Inspiring God! who, boundless Spirit all,
> And unremitting energy, pervades,
> Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole."

A passage at the end of "Spring" contains a well-known line: —

> "Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

The lines on the robin, in "Winter," are in Thomson's best manner: —

> "The fowls of heaven,
> Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
> The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
> Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
> The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,

Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;
Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet."

Lyrical Poetry: Devotional, Loyal, Patriotic, Amatory, Bacchanalian, Martial.

Lyrical poetry, as its name denotes, implied originally that the words were accompanied by lively music. A rapid movement, and a corresponding rapidity in the verse, are essential to it. It is the glowing utterance of minds, not calm and thoughtful, but excited and impassioned; it appertains, therefore, to the affective and emotional side of human nature, and has nothing to do with the reasoning and meditative side. Wordsworth, in pursuance of a poetical theory, published in his youth a collection of "Lyrical Ballads;" but they were not lyrical, because there was no passion in them, and much reflection. In later life, he wisely changed their designation.

There are certain main lyrical themes, corresponding to the passions and emotions which exercise the most agitating sway over the human heart. These are, devotion, loyalty, patriotism, love, war, and revelry. We will take each theme separately, and, from among the innumerable lyrical compositions which adorn our literature, select a very few as a sample of the riches of the land. The task of selection is much facilitated by the recent publication of a book called "The Golden Treasury," being a collection of the best songs and lyrics in the language, admirably edited by Mr. Palgrave.

1. Among devotional lyrics there is none nobler than Milton's "Christmas Ode." Hallam pronounced it to be "perhaps the finest ode in the English language." A certain ruggedness of diction partially disfigures the later stanzas; but, taking the poem as a whole, the music of the numbers is worthy of the stately yet swift march of the thought. We must find space for the opening and concluding stanzas: —

"It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature in awe to him
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She wooes the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But He, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;
She, crowned with olive-green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes an universal peace through sea and land.

No war or battle sound
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookèd chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by."

The discomfiture and flight of the heathen divinities upon the advent of the Redeemer, and the silence of the oracles, are then described; and the ode concludes with the following stanzas: —

"So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave;
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest:
Time is, our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright harnessed angels sit, in orders serviceable."

Crashaw's lyrics of devotion are often beautiful, though their effect is injured by the conceits in which he, as a writer of the fantastic school, was wont to indulge. Dryden is the author of a fine paraphrase of the hymn, "Veni Creator Spiritus." Pope's "Messiah" is a lyrical eclogue in imitation of the fourth eclogue of Virgil; but it is not to be compared in merit to the noble and almost inspired address to Pollio. In his hymn entitled "The Dying Christian to his Soul," Pope essayed to rival Dryden and Addison in this field also. The effort cannot be pronounced unsuccessful; yet the art and labor are too transparent, and the ejaculations have a slightly theatrical cast: —

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh! quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss, of dying!

Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

The world recedes, it disappears;
Heaven opens on my eyes; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring;
Lend, lend your wings! I mount, I fly;
O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

In the present century Byron and Moore have each tried their hand at sacred lyrics. The "Hebrew Melodies" of the former, and the "Sacred Melodies" of the latter, contain pieces of great lyrical beauty. In the art of wedding words to sounds, no English poet ever excelled or perhaps equalled Moore. The gift is exhibited in the following sacred melody, which is but a sample of a great number all equally felicitous in this respect: —

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea:
Jehovah hath triumphed; his people are free.
Sing; for the might of the tyrant is broken;
His chariots, his horsemen, so splendid and brave,
How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.

Praise to the conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow, his breath was our sword:
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
The Lord but looked forth from his pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are whelmed in the tide."

2. Of the loyal songs with which our poetry abounds, certain classes only can be said to possess real excellence. When it is on the winning side, loyalty loses its passion and its pathos; its effusions tend to become interested, and lie under the suspicion of servility. It is for this reason that such poems as Dryden's "Astræa Redux," and Addison's heroics in honor of William III.,

fall flat and cold on the ear. But when loyalty is struggling, or when it is persecuted, it is a noble because a disinterested sentiment, and it gives birth to noble poems. In our own history these conditions have been present on two occasions, — during the civil war, and after the revolution of 1688. The royalist and the Jacobite songs are therefore the only loyal lyrics which need arrest our attention. Of the former class we shall quote a portion of the well-known lines composed by the gallant Lovelace while in prison: —

"When Love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

. . . . . .

"When, linnet-like confinèd, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my king,
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
These for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty."

The Jacobite songs, which are mostly of unknown authorship, are full of spirit and fire, and possess that melancholy charm which belongs to a great cause vainly

maintained by high-souled men against an overpowering destiny. We select the following specimen: [1] —

"To daunton me, an' me sae young,
An' gude King James's auldest son!
Oh, that's the thing that ne'er can be,
For the man's unborn that will daunton me!

"Oh, set me ance on Scottish land,
An' gie me my braid-sword in my hand,
Wi' my blue bonnet aboon my bree,
An' show me the man that will daunton me!

"It's nae the battle's deadly stoure,
Nor friends pruived fause, that'll gar me cower;
But the reckless hand o' povertie,
Oh! that alane can daunton me.

"High was I born to kingly gear,
But a cuif [2] came in my cap to wear;
But wi' my braid-sword I'll let him see
He's nae the man will daunton me."

The best and most spirited of these Jacobite lyrics are to be found in Ritson's "Collection of Scottish Songs," or Hogg's "Jacobite Relics."

3. That *amour sacré de la patrie* which in all countries is a fruitful theme for the lyric Muse is among ourselves by no means homogeneous. We have Scotch patriotism, Irish patriotism, and British or imperial patriotism, and noble lyrics inspired by each. Lastly, as there is a poetical justice, so there is a poetical patriotism,— a feeling which usually goes abroad to seek for its objects, and is eloquent upon the wrongs sustained by foreign nationalities. Scotland vents her patriotic fervor in Burns's manly lines, supposed to be addressed by Bruce to his army before the battle of Bannockburn. Her poets find her ancient triumphs over England more soul-inspiring than any of those which her sons have, since the

[1] From Cromek's Songs of Nithsdale. [2] Worthless fellow.

Union, assisted her great neighbor to achieve. For patriotism is intense in proportion to its local concentration; and zeal for the preservation of the integrity of a great empire, though it may produce the same course of action, is an affair of the reason rather than of the feelings, and therefore less likely to give rise to lyrical developments. Two stanzas from the song above mentioned are subjoined: —

"Wha wad be a traitor knave,
Wha wad fill a coward's grave,
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Coward! turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa'?
Let him follow me!"[1]

[1] In the first edition, I printed the last line of this stanza, "Scotsman, on wi' me!" but otherwise it stood precisely as it now stands. A writer in "The Museum" charged me with having misquoted this stanza "so egregiously, as to have produced ludicrous nonsense." According to him, "by making the first three lines interrogative, it is implied that *no one* is prepared to draw freedom's sword." Jehu asked, "Who is on the Lord's side, who?" when he wished to have Jezebel thrown out of the window; he expected, therefore, to find that *no one* was on the Lord's side, if this new grammatical canon be correct. In other respects, too, the criticism is unlucky. Referring to Allan Cunningham's edition of the poet's works, I find that Burns originally wrote (see his letter to G. Thomson, dated in September, 1793), —

"Freeman stand, or freeman fa'?
Let him follow me!"

The "ludicrous nonsense," therefore, produced by the mark of interrogation, must be fathered on the poet himself. This first and clearly best version was adapted to the air, "Hey, tuttie, taitie." Thomson wrote back, delighted with the words, but objecting to the air which they were set to, and suggesting such alterations in the terminal lines of the stanzas as would adapt the song to the air "Lewie Gordon." Burns accepted the suggestion, and, in his next letter, gave an altered

Sir Walter Scott was by reason and principle a stanch imperialist; and his poem on Waterloo illustrates the general or British element in his patriotism. But how cold and tame it reads compared with the glowing lines which burst from his lips, as his heart broods over the rugged charms of his own Caledonia!

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there be, go mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell:
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim, —
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.
O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand?

version, in which, whether by accident or design, a comma was substituted for the mark of interrogation, so that the stanzas read, —

"Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Caledonian! on wi' me."

Alexander Smith, in his late edition of Burns, retains the mark of interrogation, but prints the terminal lines as they stand in the second version. I decidedly think that the first version, representing the original form of this noble theme as it flowed fresh and warm from Robert Burns's heart, should be strictly adhered to in all future editions.

Still as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none shall guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan."

Irish patriotism blooms, as might be expected, into verse of a mournful, almost of an elegiac, cast. Moore's poetry furnishes us with many beautiful specimens, among which the following lines, entitled "After the Battle," are not the least beautiful: —

"Night closed upon the conqueror's way,
And lightnings showed the distant hill,
Where they who lost that dreadful day
Stood few and faint, but fearless still.
The soldier's hope, the patriot's zeal,
Forever dimmed, forever crossed;
Oh! who can tell what heroes feel,
When all but life and honor's lost?

The last sad hour of freedom's dream,
And valor's task, moved slowly by,
While mute they watched, till morning's beam
Should rise, and give them light to die!
There is a world where souls are free,
Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss:
If death that world's bright opening be,
Oh! who would live a slave in this?"

British — if it should not rather be called English — patriotism has produced such poems as Glover's "Hosier's Ghost," Cowper's "Boadicea," and Campbell's "Mariners of England." From the "Boadicea"

we extract a portion of the Druid's address to the patriot queen of the Iceni: —

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground:
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway:
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Poetical patriotism inspired Gray's "Bard," Byron's "Isles of Greece," and Shelley's "Hellas." In the first-named poem, the last of the Welsh bards, standing on a crag that overhangs the pass through which King Edward and his army are defiling, invokes ruin on the race and name of the oppressor of his country, and, at the conclusion of his hymn of vengeful despair, flings himself into the sea. Byron's noble lyric is so well known that we shall not spoil it by quotation, but prefer to extract portions of two choruses from Shelley's "Hellas," in which, with the enthusiasm of genius, the poet paints an ideal future for enfranchised and regenerate Greece: —

"Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;

But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought, and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
Rule the present from the past:
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set."

But this is not enough; Greece herself is to live again: —

"A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls its fountains
Against the morning star;
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies;
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free;
Although a subtler Sphynx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
And, to remoter time,
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendor of her prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take, or heaven can give."

4. Love songs, or amatory lyrics, may be counted by hundreds in all our poetical collections. Those of Surrey, having been written under the influence of Petrarch, have a classic sound, but are somewhat monoto-

nous. The following sonnet is a specimen much above the average: —

"Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice;
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen;
In presence prest of people, mad or wise;
Set me in high, or yet in low degree;
In longest night, or in the longest day;
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be;
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray;
Set me in heaven, or earth, or elsè in hell,
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, — alive whereso I dwell,
Sick, or in health, in evil fame or good, —
Hers will I be; and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought."

Sir Thomas Wyat is the author of the following elegant stanzas, which have the heading, "The Lover's Lute cannot be blamed though it sing of his Lady's Unkindness: " —

"Blame not my lute! for he must sound
Of this or that, as liketh me;
For lack of wit the lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch thy change,
Blame not my lute!
. . . . . .
Spite asketh spite, and changing change,
And falsèd faith must needs be known;
The fault's so great, the case so strange,
Of right it must abroad be blown:
Then, since that by thine own desert
My songs do tell how true thou art,
Blame not my lute!

Blame but thyself that hast misdone,
And well deservèd to have blame;
Change thou thy way, so evil begone,
And then my lute shall sound that same;
But, if till then my fingers play
By thy desert their wonted way,
Blame not my lute!"

But, with the earlier poets in general, Venus is generally found in close alliance with Bacchus; and the sentiment which inspires their strains is of a grosser kind than that which the refining mystical poets of later times have introduced. Moore in this respect resembles the poets of the Elizabethan and Stuart periods rather than his own contemporaries. We shall give one or two specimens of both styles, beginning with Ben Jonson's graceful lines "To Celia:" —

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But, might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee!"

Some of Shakspeare's sonnets might well be quoted in this connection, particularly that beginning, "Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye?" The exquisite lines which follow occur in "Measure for Measure:" —

"Take, oh, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were foresworn,
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn;
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again, —
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!"

Marlowe's "Come, live with me, and be my Love," and Raleigh's reply, "If all the World and Love were young," are beautiful specimens of what may be called the pastoral love song. Waller's "Go, lovely Rose," and Carew's "He that loves a Rosy Cheek," are in all books of extracts; but the latter poet's "Give me more Love or more Disdain," is omitted in the Golden Treasury and several other collections; we shall therefore quote it:—

"Give me more love, or more disdain:
The torrid or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain;
The temperate affords me none;
Either extreme of love or hate
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storm: if it be love,
Like Danaë in that golden shower,
I swim in pleasure; if it prove
Disdain, that torrent will devour
My vulture hopes, and he's possessed
Of heaven, that's but from hell released;
Then crown my joys, or cure my pain;
Give me more love, or more disdain."

The following extract is from George Wither's poem of "The Steadfast Shepherd:"—

"Can he prize the tainted posies
Which on every breast are worn,
That may pluck the virgin roses
From their never touchèd thorn?
I can go rest
On her sweet breast,
That is the pride of Cynthia's train;
Then stay thy tongue:
Thy mermaid song
Is all bestowed on me in vain.

He's a fool that basely dallies
Where each peasant mates with him:
Shall I haunt the throngèd valleys,
While there's noble hills to climb?

No, no! though clowns
Are scared with frowns,
I know the best can but disdain;
And those I'll prove,
So will thy love
Be all bestowed on me in vain."

Cowley's "Mistress" is a collection of love songs full of bold or curious figures, of far-fetched, fanciful comparisons. The following stanzas, entitled "Her Name," are very musical and graceful: —

"With more than Jewish reverence as yet
Do I the Sacred Name conceal;
When, ye kind stars, ah! when will it be fit
This gentle mystery to reveal?
When will our love be named, and we possess
That christening as a badge of happiness?

So bold as yet no verse of mine has been,
To wear that gem on any line;
Nor, till the happy nuptial Muse be seen,
Shall any stanza with it shine.
Rest, mighty Name, till then; for thou must be
Laid down by her, ere taken up by me.

Then all the fields and woods shall with it ring;
Then Echo's burden it shall be;
Then all the birds in several notes shall sing,
And all the rivers murmur thee;
Then every wind the sound shall upward bear,
And softly whisper't to some angel's ear.

Then shall thy Name through all my verse be spread
Thick as the flowers in meadows lie;
And when in future times they shall be read
(As sure, I think, they will not die),
If any critic doubt that they be mine,
Men by that stamp shall quickly know the coin.

Meanwhile I will not dare to make a name
To represent thee by;
Adam, God's nomenclator, could not frame
One that enough should signify;
Astræa or Celia as unfit would prove
For thee, as 'tis to call the Deity, Jove."

The following stanzas give a favorable idea of the amatory odes of Herrick: —

"'To the Virgins, to make much of Time.'

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may:
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But, being spent, the worse and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And, while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry."

Milton, Dryden, and Pope furnish us with nothing to quote under this head. When we come to modern times, the difficulty lies in the selection. What treasures of lyrical force and sweetness are contained in the love songs of Burns! We must give at least one example: —

"O Mary, at thy window be:
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see
That make the miser's treasure poor;
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing:
I sat, but neither heard nor saw;

Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a',
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt nae gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison."

In grace and melody, if not in pathos, Moore's love songs may be matched with those of Burns, as the following lines exemplify: —

"Take back the virgin page
White and unwritten still:
Some hand more calm and sage
That leaf must fill;
Thoughts come as pure as light,
Pure as even you require;
But, oh! each word I write
Love turns to fire.

Yet let me keep the book:
Oft shall my heart renew,
When on its leaves I look,
Dear thoughts of you.
Like you, 'tis fair and bright;
Like you, too bright and fair
To let wild passion write
One wrong wish there.

"Haply, when from those eyes
Far, far away I roam,
Should calmer thoughts arise
Towards thee and home,
Fancy may trace some line
Worthy those eyes to meet, —
Thoughts that not burn but shine,
Pure, calm, and sweet."

Byron's "Maid of Athens," Shelley's "Epithalamium," and Coleridge's "Geneviève," we must be content with naming.

5. Revelry is a lyrical theme which has been largely illustrated by our poets, especially by those of the seventeenth century. We must confine ourselves to a single specimen, taken from Cowley: —

"The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks, and gapes for drink again;
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair;
The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink,
Drinks ten thousand rivers up
So filled that they o'erflow the cup.
The busy sun (and one would guess
By his drunken fiery face no less)
Drinks up the sea; and, when he's done,
The moon and stars drink up the sun.
They drink and dance by their own light;
They drink and revel all the night.
Nothing in Nature's sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high;
Fill all the glasses there; for why
Should every creature drink but I?
Why, men of morals, tell me why?"

6. The lyrics of war, whatever may be the reason, are not found in great numbers, nor of extraordinary merit, in English literature. We might mention Campbell's "Hohenlinden" and "Battle of the Baltic," the stirring ballad of "Count Albert," and the gathering song "Pibroch of Donuil Dhu," both by Scott; and Macaulay's ballads of "Naseby" and "Ivry," and "Lays of Rome." In Dryden's great lyric, "Alexander's Feast," the "mighty master" of the lyre, after successfully preluding upon the themes of love and revelry, thus in a bolder strain summons the hero to war: —

"Now strike the golden lyre again, —
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain:
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed he stares around:
Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear!
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain;
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of the hostile gods.
The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!"

Elegiac Poetry: "Fidele," "The Castaway," "Lycidas," "Adonais."

English poetry, in sympathy with the sad and lowering skies of our northern climate, is never more powerful and pathetic than when heard in the accents of mourning. The influences of external nature and of the national temperament dispose our poets to taciturnity and thoughtfulness; and, in a world so full of change and death, thoughtfulness easily passes into sadness. Elegiac poems may be distinguished as objective or subjective, according as their tenor and general aim may be, either simply to occupy themselves

with the fortunes, character, and acts of the departed, or to found a train of musings, having reference to self, or at least strongly colored by the writer's personality, upon the fact of bereavement. Among those of the former class may be specified, the dirge in Cymbeline, Milton's sonnet on Shakspeare, Dryden's elegy on Cromwell, Tickell's on Addison, Cowper's lines on "The Loss of the Royal George," Campbell's "Lord Ullin's Daughter," the song of Harold in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," Cowper's "Castaway," and Pope's "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady." Nothing can exceed the simple beauty of the song of the brothers over the body of Fidele:[1]—

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home thou art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers, must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave!"

[1] Cymbeline, Act iv. Scene 2.

Cowper's lines on the loss of the Royal George sound like the passing bell: —

> "Toll for the brave, —
> The brave that are no more!
> All sunk beneath the wave
> Fast by their native shore!"

"The Castaway," by the same author, combines what is most touching in both kinds of elegy. After a minute description of the long struggle for life of the sailor lost overboard, the interest of the tale, great in itself, is suddenly rendered tenfold more intense by the application of it in the last stanza to the case of the unhappy writer: —

> "No voice divine the storm allayed,
> No light propitious shone,
> When, far from all effectual aid,
> We perished, each alone;
> But I beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelmed in blacker gulfs than he."

A similar turn is given to the conclusion of Pope's "Elegy:" —

> "So peaceful rests without a stone, a name,
> What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
> How loved, how honored once, avails thee not,
> To whom related, or by whom begot;
> A heap of dust alone remains of thee:
> 'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
> Poets themselves must fall like those they sung;
> Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue;
> E'en he whose soul now melts in mournful lays
> Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays.
> Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
> And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
> Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er;
> The Muse forgot, and thou beloved no more!"

Among elegies of the subjective class may be mentioned the lines written by Raleigh the night before

his death, Cowley's elegy on Crashaw, Milton's "Lycidas," Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," and Shelley's "Adonais." At the close of his meteor-like career, the gallant Raleigh wrote his own epitaph in these few pious and feeling lines: —

"Even such is Time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days.
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust."

"Lycidas" was written by Milton to commemorate the death of a college friend, Mr. King, who was drowned on the passage from England to Ireland. But Milton's grief sets him thinking; and, in this remarkable poem, the monotone of a deep sorrow is replaced by the linked musings of a mind, which, once set in motion by grief, pours forth abundantly the treasures of thought and imagination stored up within it. The following eloquent passage contains a line that has almost passed into a proverb: —

"Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:

'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-seeing Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.' "

So also in "Adonais," which is an elegy on Keats, the glorious imagination of Shelley transports him into regions far beyond the reach of the perturbations of a common grief: —

"The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the land, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given.
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven;
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

It would be impossible to give an adequate idea of Gray's famous elegy by a short extract, but the student is recommended to read the entire poem carefully. He will find it eminently subjective in spirit; and may compare it with Hamlet's moralizings over the skull of Yorick. Both may be regarded as products of a mind in which there is a morbid preponderance of the contemplative faculty, — the balance not being duly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect.[1]

Miscellaneous Poems.

A large number of poems, chiefly belonging to modern times, still remain unnoticed, because they

[1] See Coleridge's remarks on Hamlet. Literary Remains, vol. ii. p. 204.

refuse to be classified under any of the received and long-established designations. This miscellaneous section we propose to divide into, —

1. Poems founded on the passions and affections.
2. Poems of sentiment and reflection.
3. Poems of imagination and fancy.
4. Philosophical poetry.

1. Poems of the first kind are evidently of the lyrical order; but they are not to be classed among lyrics, because they are deficient in the excitation of thought and rapidity of movement which the true lyric must exhibit. They occur in great numbers in the works of modern poets; and, if a type of excellence in the kind were required, a purer one could not easily be found than Wordsworth's "Michael." Many have seen the unfinished sheepfold in Green Head Ghyll, referred to in the following lines, which Michael, the old Westmoreland "statesman," after the news had come that the son so tenderly cherished had brought disgrace and peril on his head, had never afterwards the heart to complete: —

"There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart.
I have conversed with more than one, who well
Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet,

The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man; and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage, which was named the Evening Star,
Is gone; the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood: yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen,
Beside the boisterous brook of Green Head Ghyll."

Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," a poem in which love, pride, repentance, and despair seem to be striving together for the mastery, and an overcharged heart seeks relief in bursts of wild, half-frenzied eloquence, must also be placed among poems of this class.

2. Sentiment may be regarded as the synthesis of thought and feeling; and therefore poems of this second class hold an intermediate place between those founded on the passions and affections, and those in which intellectual faculties are solely or principally exercised. They are very numerous in every period of our literary history. Spenser's "Ruines of Time" is an early and very beautiful example. In the midst of a personified presentment of Fame, the wish recorded of Alexander is thus strikingly related: —

"But Fame with golden wing aloft doth flie
Above the reach of ruinous decay,
And with brave plumes doth beat the azure skie,
Admired of base-born men from farre away;

Then whoso will by vertuous deeds assay
To mount to heaven, on Pegasus must ride,
And by sweet poets' verse be glorified.

For not to have been dipt in Lethe lake
Could save the son of Thetis from to die,
But that blind bard did him immortal make
With verses dipped in dew of Castalie;
Which made the Eastern Conquerour to crie,
'O fortunate young man whose vertue found
So brave a trump, thy noble acts to sound!' "

Sir John Davies's poem on "The Immortality of the Soul" may be classed either with the present series, or under the head of didactic poetry. The poetry of Quarles is partly sentimental, partly fantastic. A fine couplet occurs in the poem entitled "Faith:" —

"Brave minds oppressed, should, in despite of fate,
Look greatest, like the sun, in lowest state."

"The Soul's Errand" said to be by Raleigh, Milton's "Penseroso," Dryden's "Religio Laici," and Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," are additional examples. Cowper's "Lines on his Mother's Picture" deserve special mention. The chief merits of this celebrated poem are, a remarkable tenderness and purity of feeling; the vividness of imagination with which past scenes and circumstances are represented; and, occasionally, dignity of thought couched in graceful expressions. Its demerits are, the egotistic strain which is apt to affect a poet who leads an unemployed and retired life, leading him to dwell on circumstances trivial or vulgar, equally with those of a truly poetical cast, because they interest himself; and a lamentable inequality hence arising: such worthless lines as, —

"The biscuit or confectionary plum;"

or,

"I pricked them into paper with a pin," —

occurring side by side with others most musical and suggestive, such as, —

> "Children not thine have trod my nursery floor,"

and

> "Time has but half succeeded in his theft, —
> Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left."

"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" must also be ranked with poems of sentiment and reflection; for, though in form it resembles a descriptive poem, that which gives it its peculiar character is not the description of any external scenes, but the minute analysis and exhibition of the writer's feelings, reflections, and states of mind. The third canto, for instance, is, in a great measure, a piece of autobiography. Written in 1816, just after he had been separated from his wife and child, and, amidst a storm of obloquy, had passed into voluntary exile, this canto paints the revolt of Byron's tortured spirit against the world's opinion, to which, while he scorned it, he was to the last a slave. The moral of all the earlier portion is scarcely caricatured by the parody in "The Rejected Addresses:" —

> "Woe's me! the brightest wreaths [Joy] ever gave,
> Are but as flowers that decorate a tomb.
> Man's heart, the mournful urn o'er which they wave,
> Is sacred to despair, its pedestal the grave."

Many lines current in general conversation, but often quoted in ignorance of the source whence they come, occur in "Childe Harold." Few have not heard of those magnificent equivalents by which the skull is described as —

> "The dome of thought, the palace of the soul."

Again, O'Connell's favorite quotation at the repeal

meetings of 1844 is found in the second canto; it is an invocation to the modern Greeks: —

"Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not,
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

At the ball given in Brussels on the night before the advance on Waterloo, we read that

"All went merry as a marriage bell."

And it is said of the young French general, Marceau, that —

"He *had kept*
The whiteness of his soul, and so men o'er him wept."

In this dream-land of sentiment, where the dry light of the intellect is variously colored and modified by the play of the emotions, the magnificent shadowy ideas of Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" find their appropriate home.[1]

3. Imagination and fancy are both intellectual faculties; and the main function of both is to detect and exhibit the resemblances which exist among objects of sense or intelligence. The difference between them, according to the doctrine of Coleridge, may be generally stated thus: that, whereas fancy exhibits only external resemblances, imagination loves to disclose the internal and essential relations which bind together things apparently unlike. Drayton's "Nymphidia" is the creation of a fancy the liveliest and most inventive, but shows little or no imaginative power. On the other hand, Shakspeare's "Venus and Adonis," Milton's "L'Allegro," and the most perfect among Shelley's poems, are works of imagination. If we analyze the series of comparisons of which Shelley makes his "Skylark" the subject, we shall find that in every case

[1] See p. 357.

the likeness indicated lies deeper than the surface, and calls into play higher faculties than the mere intellectual reproduction of the impressions of sense: —

"Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not;

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from her view;

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass."

In "The Cloud," by the same poet, the imagery is partly fantastic, partly imaginative, as may be seen in the following extract: —

"That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;

And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

. . . . . .

"I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again."

4. The philosophical is distinguished from the didactic poem by the absence of a set moral purpose. In the "Essay on Man," Pope starts with the design of "vindicating the ways of God;" and, whatever may be thought of the mode of vindication, this design is adhered to throughout. Nor, again, does the philosophical poem, like the narrative or epic, embody a definite story, with beginning, middle, and end. Its parts may, indeed, be connected, as in the case of "The Excursion," by a slight narrative thread; but its characteristic excellence does not depend upon this, but upon the mode in which the different subjects and personages introduced are philosophically handled, and, it may perhaps be said, on the soundness of the philosophy itself. How far the pursuit of these objects is consistent with the full production of that kind of pleasure which it is the business of poetry to excite, is a question difficult of decision.

CHAPTER II.

PROSE WRITINGS.

A ROUGH general classification and description of the subject-matter, with a few critical sketches of particular works or groups of works, is all that we shall attempt in the present volume.

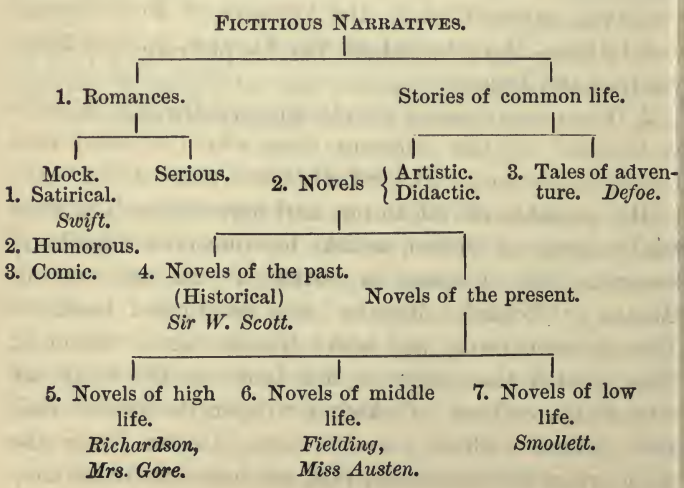
The prose writings of our literature may be arranged under the following six heads: —

1. Works of fiction.
2. Works of satire, wit, and humor.
3. Oratory, with the connected departments of journal-writing and pamphleteering.
4. History; including, besides history proper, biography, and narrative works of all kinds, as subsidiary branches.
5. Theology.
6. Philosophy; including, besides philosophy proper, essays and political treatises, and all works of thought and theory, e.g., æsthetics and literary criticism.

1. Prose Fiction.

By a work of fiction a *narrative* work is always understood. A fiction which describes not imaginary actions, but an imaginary state of things, such as More's "Utopia," must be considered as a work of thought and theory, and will fall under our sixth head. Works of fiction, then, or fictitious narratives, are of two kinds, — those in which the agencies are natural, and those in which they are not. In the latter case they are called romances; in the former, stories of com-

mon life. Romances are either mock or serious; and mock romances may be either satirical, humorous, or comic. Stories of common life are divided into tales of adventure, and novels; the novel being in its highest and purest form the correlative in prose of the epic poem in poetry, and, like it, treating of "one great complex action, in a lofty style, and with fulness of detail."[1] Whatever be its form, the novel must possess unity of plan, and is thereby distinguishable from the mere tale of adventure or travel, in which this unity is not required. Novels, again, may either refer to the past, in which case they are called historical novels, or to the present. If the latter, they admit of a further subdivision, according to the social level at which the leading characters move, into novels of high life, of middle life, and of low life. Further, there is a cross division applicable to the whole class of novels, into those of the artistic and those of the didactic kind. The following table exhibits the above classification of works of fiction at a glance: —



1. The word "romance" is here used in a sense which implies, that, in works so called, some preternatural or supernatural agency is instrumental in working out the plot. We have not many serious romances in English; The "Grand Cyprus," and other delectable productions of Scudéry and Calprenède, were read, admired, and translated amongst us in their day, but do not appear to have been imitated, at least in prose. "St. Leon," by Godwin, "Frankenstein, or the Ghost-seer," by his daughter Mrs. Shelley, and "The Old English Baron," by Clara Reeve, are among the principal performances in this kind. "The Phantom Ship," by Capt. Marryatt, is a remarkable and beautiful story, founded on the grand old legend of "The Flying Dutchman." One of the Waverley novels, "The Monastery," in which the apparitions of the White Lady of Avenel have an important influence on the development of the story, falls accordingly within the scope of our definition. The most notable examples of the mock romance are "The Travels of Lemuel Gulliver." The comic variety is exemplified in the Voyages of Brobdingnag and Lilliput, the satirical in the Voyages to the Houynhnms and Laputa.

2. The distinction of novels into artistic and didactic is founded on the different aims which entered into their composition. The artistic novel aims at the beautiful representation of things and persons, such as they really appear in nature, or may be conceived capable of becoming; its purpose is æsthetic, and not moral. Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" is a celebrated instance. The didactic novel has some special moral lesson in view, which the progress and issue of the story are intended to enforce. Godwin's "Caleb Williams," Bulwer's "Paul Clifford" and "Eugene Aram," and the whole class of religious novels, are instances in point.

3. Among tales of adventure, Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" bears the palm. Among the many imitations, more or less close, to which that celebrated production has given rise, may be particularized Miss Porter's "Narrative of Sir Edward Seaward," and Capt. Marryatt's delightful story of "Masterman Ready." "The "Travels of Anastasius," by Hope, enjoyed a great reputation fifty years ago.

4. Novels of the past are not all necessarily historical novels, since they may relate to supposed events in the *private* life of former ages, whereas by the historical novel is commonly understood a work of which the interest principally turns on the introduction of some personages or events of historic fame. Thus Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," in which none of the characters are historical, can only, if at all, claim the title of an historical novel in virtue of the historic catastrophe, —the great eruption of Vesuvius, which buried Pompeii in ashes in the reign of Vespasian.

In the historical novel, Sir Walter Scott, the inventor of the style, remains unapproached. Out of twenty-seven novels (omitting short tales) which compose the Waverley series, twenty are historical. The most remote period to which the author has ascended is the eleventh century, the events described in "Count Robert of Paris" being supposed to occur during the first crusade. This, however, is one of the latest and least interesting of the series. "The Betrothed," "The Talisman," and "Ivanhoe," refer to the twelfth century; the grand, romantic personage of Richard Cœur de Lion figuring prominently in both the novels last named. The thirteenth century seems to have had no attractions for our author; and even in the fourteenth, a period so memorable both in English and Scottish history, he has given us only "The Fair Maid of

Perth" and "Castle Dangerous," the striking story of "Rienzi" was left for Bulwer to appropriate, and work up into an historical fiction of the highest order. In the fifteenth century, the reign of Louis XI. is admirably illustrated in "Quentin Durward;" in which the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, is presented to us in the plenitude of his power and prosperity; while in "Anne of Geierstein" we see that power humbled to the dust by the arms of the sturdy Switzers. "The Monastery," with its sequel "The Abbot," exhibits the distracted state of Scotland during the religious wars of the sixteenth century. In "Kenilworth," which belongs to the same period, the scene is laid in England, and the interest centres in Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the unfortunate Amy Robsart. The seventeenth century must have possessed a peculiar interest for Scott; for the plots of no less than five of his novels are laid in it, and some of these are among the most successful efforts of his genius. The learned fool James I. is introduced in "The Fortunes of Nigel;" "The Legend of Montrose" brings before us the exploits of that gallant but ill-starred chief, and creates for us the admirable portrait of the veteran soldier trained in the Thirty Years' War under Gustavus Adolphus, the incomparable Major Dalgetty; Cromwell appears in "Woodstock;" "Peveril of the Peak" illustrates the startling contrasts which existed between the gay immoral society gathered round the court of Charles II., and the terrible Puritan element beneath the surface, crushed down but still formidable; lastly, in "Old Mortality," deemed by many to be the author's most perfect production, the plot is connected with the insurrection of the Scottish Covenanters in 1679, and brings before us the haughty form of Claverhouse. Four novels belong to the eighteenth century, — "Rob

Roy," "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," "Waverley," and "Redgauntlet." In the first, named by the happy thought of Constable, Scott's publisher, after a noted Highland freebooter, who flourished in the early part of the century, the chief historic interest lies in the admirable art with which the story brings out the contrast then existing between the civilized, law-respecting Lowlands, and the confused, turbulent state of things a few miles off across the Highland border, where blackmail was levied, and clannish custom was nearly supreme. In "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," the incidents of the Porteous riots at Edinburgh in 1736 are interwoven with the plot; and Caroline, the generous and strong-minded queen of George II., is associated with her humble petitioner, Jeanie Deans. "Waverley" is a tale of the rising of the clans under the young Pretender in 1745; and "Redgauntlet" refers to a contemplated rising of the English Jacobites a few years later, which the unmanageable obstinacy of the Chevalier stifled in the birth.

5. In the novel of high life, the chief actors belong to the "upper ten thousand" of society. Richardson, who was himself the son of a joiner, delighted to paint the manners of this class, to which in all his novels the principal personages belong. As we read them, we associate with Sir Charles Grandisons and Lady Grandisons, with Harriet Byrons, Lovelaces, and Count Geronimos; an English squire or a foreign nobleman is the meanest company we frequent. Yet Richardson has high excellences; his characters are firmly yet delicately drawn; there is vigorous original outline, filled in and bodied out by a number of fine, almost imperceptible touches; the diction, though often copious to a fault, never sinks to mere verbiage; the story is always naturally and probably evolved, lastly, the author never obtrudes his

own personality, but leaves his work before you, to impress you or not, according to its and your own intrinsic qualities. The clever novels of Mrs. Gore have a yet more limited range than those of Richardson; they paint the present generation, and therein only the inhabitants of May Fair, and frequenters of Rotten Row.

6. The immense majority of English novels portray the manners and characters which are common in the middle ranks of society. Not to speak of works by living authors, — of the "Pickwick Papers" or "Vanity Fair," — all Fielding's novels,[1] "Joseph Andrews," "Tom Jones," and "Amelia," and those of Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth, belong to this class. "Pride and Prejudice," by Jane Austen, is the perfect type of a novel of common life; the story so concisely and dramatically told, the language so simple, the shades and half-shades of human character so clearly presented, and the operation of various motives so delicately traced, — attest this gifted woman to have been the perfect mistress of her art. Under this head are also included such of Scott's novels as have no historical element, e. g., "Guy Mannering," "The Antiquary," "The Bride of Lammermoor," &c.

7. The best specimens in our literature of the novel of low life are by living authors. Which of us has not turned vagrant with Little Nell, and dived into the recesses of the Seven Dials with Fagin and the Artful Dodger?[2] "Paul Clifford" also, by Bulwer, belongs to this class; and, in the last century, Smollett's "Roderick Random" and several of Defoe's novels, which treat principally of uproarious scenes and rough characters, from which the sentimental Richardson would have recoiled in disgust.

[1] For an admirable account of them and their author, see Thackeray's Lectures on the English Humorists.

[2] Characters in the Old Curiosity Shop and Oliver Twist.

2. Works of Satire, Wit, and Humor.

Among the best performances of this kind which our literature contains, are "The Tale of a Tub" and "The Battle of the Books" by Swift, Sterne's "Tristram Shandy" and "Sentimental Journey," and the "Anti-Jacobin" by Canning, Ellis, and Frere.

An explanation has already been given of the title of the first among the works above named.[1] Swift tells us that it was composed when "his invention was at the height, and his reading fresh in his head." The "Epistle dedicated to Prince Posterity" is a fine piece of irony; Dryden is maliciously mentioned in it, as a poet who, the prince would be surprised to hear, had written many volumes, and made a noise among his contemporaries. The tale itself, such as it is, relates the adventures of the brothers Peter, Martin,[2] and Jack; and with the sections in which it is carried on, other sections alternate, in which the abuses of learning are exposed. The three brothers, as the names imply, are allegorical, and represent the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic systems respectively. The book was eagerly read and discussed: a thing little to be wondered at, when a satire, expressed with inconceivable force and humor, and upon which all the resources of an unquestionably great genius had been expended, was directed against the religious belief and practice of the whole Roman Catholic, and a large portion of the Protestant world. But, though admired, it was widely

[1] See p. 257.

[2] That by "Martin" Swift originally meant Lutheranism, and not the Church of England, seems clear from the passage in the Fragment appended to the work, where he speaks of dropping "the former Martin," and substituting for him "Lady Bess's institution," by which the Church of England could alone be meant. But it is likely that he was not unwilling, at a later period, to have it supposed that "Martin" stood for the Church of England.

condemned. Smalridge, a divine of that age, when taxed with the authorship by Sacheverell, answered with indignation, "Not all that you and I have in the world, nor all that we ever shall have, should hire me to write 'The Tale of a Tub.'" Swift therefore found it necessary to prefix an "Apology" to the edition of 1709, in which he declared that his meaning had been misinterpreted in many places, and that his real object throughout was to serve pure religion and morality. But, if this was his object, he chose a singular way of promoting it. Martin's proceedings, which are represented as rational and right, are disposed of in a page and a half; the rest of the work consists of satirical descriptions of Peter's knavery and mendacity, and of Jack's fanatical extravagance. Of course the general effect of the book is that of a satirical attack on Christianity itself. Voltaire's strong approval, and recommendation to his followers to peruse it, are conclusive as to the real relation in which it stands to religion. What chiefly delighted him was the vigor of the attacks on Peter. These, though highly humorous, are coarse, and sometimes revolting, particularly when it is considered that they came from a clergyman. They show plainly enough that Swift was at the time a cynic and a materialist, and utterly scouted all religion in his secret heart.

In "The Battle of the Books," which, as already mentioned, is Swift's contribution to the controversy on the respective merits of classical and modern literature, the ancient and modern books in the Royal Library are represented as engaging each other in a pitched battle. The moderns march under various leaders, Cowley and Boileau commanding the light horse, and Descartes and Hobbes leading on the bowmen; but Milton and Shakspeare, indignant at the depreciators of their great mas-

ters, take no part in the fray. The Ancients form a small and compact body, under the command of Homer, Pindar, Plato, &c. A humorous description of the battle follows, which ends in the moderns being routed, horse and foot. A change of style occurs about the middle of the satire, and thence to the end the Homeric manner is parodied very amusingly.

"The Anti-Jacobin," or "Weekly Examiner," established in 1797 by Canning and his friends, might be classed, according to its form, under the head of Journalism; but since its professed object was to chastise by ridicule, and so render harmless, the Jacobinical root-and-branch aspirations of that portion of the press which had adopted the new French principles, it is properly classed among works of satire and wit. In performing this self-assigned function, the conductors of "The Anti-Jacobin" did not mince matters. Their language was as violent and abusive as that of their opponents, their accusations as sweeping, and their scrupulosity of assertion not much superior. But the vigor and wit with which they employed the weapons of sarcasm, irony, and parody, gave them a decided advantage, and have gained for "The Anti-Jacobin" a permanent place in our libraries. Parody was used by Canning in the sonnet upon Mrs. Browning, imitated from Southey's lines on Marten the regicide, and in the famous ballad of "The Needy Knife-Grinder," suggested by Southey's Sapphics. The prose portion of the paper contained each week three paragraphs headed "Lies," "Misrepresentations," "Mistakes," in which the corresponding delinquencies of the Jacobin press during the preceding week were examined and castigated. In the second volume Canning introduced the prose drama of "The Rovers; or, the Double Arrangement," a capital burlesque on Kotzebue's plays, which were then the rage

in England. The virtuous sentiments and loose practice of Kotzebue's heroes and heroines are amusingly exhibited in Matilda and her lover. Matilda's "A thought strikes me: let us swear eternal friendship," is exquisite in its absurdity.

Before speaking of works of humor, it is necessary, in order not to confound them with works of satire, to define the term, "humor" with some strictness. Humor is a peculiar way of regarding persons, actions, and things, in conformity to the peculiar character of the humorist. It is to be carefully distinguished from wit, which is the quick apprehension of relations between dissimilar ideas; such relations being generally verbal rather than real. Humor looks beneath the surface; it does not stay among the familiar outsides and semblances of things; it seizes upon strange out-of-the-way relations between ideas, which are real rather than verbal. In this it resembles imagination; and the humorist must, indeed, possess this fusing and re-uniting faculty in a high degree; but the difference is, that the relations between ideas which his turn of mind leads him to perceive are mostly *odd*, *strange* relations, the exhibition of which, while it makes us thoughtful, because the relations are real, not verbal merely, awakens also our sense of the ludicrous. We may take as an illustration the strange train of ideas in which Hamlet indulges in the scene with the grave-digger, when he "traces in imagination the noble dust of Alexander, until he finds it stopping a bung-hole." Again, the property which has been assigned to humor, of looking beneath the surface, involves the power of detecting empty pretension and hypocrisy, however carefully they may be disguised. Under all the trappings and habiliments with which he seeks to veil his littleness, the humorist still detects the insignificant creature, *man;* and delights, by homely

apologue or humiliating comparison, to hold up a mirror in which he may see himself as he is. This is the direction in which the humorist approaches very near to the satirist; the distinction being that the latter has, while the former has not, a definite moral purpose, genuine or assumed, in lashing and exposing the weaknesses of mankind. Humor is exhibitive, satire didactic. In humor, as Coleridge says, there is a universalising property. Satire, on the contrary, seizes upon different classes of men, and tends always to personality. It seems never to have quite lost the memory of the scenes amid which it had its origin, — of the Fescennine license, the unlimited freedom of heaping up abuse and ridicule upon individuals, which were allowed to the Eleusinian mystics upon their return from the solemn ceremonies of initiation.

Sterne, the author of "Tristram Shandy" and "The Sentimental Journey," is essentially and above all things a humorist. "Tristram Shandy" is ostensibly a fictitious narrative; but it is really a pure work of humor, the narrative being destitute of plot, and the incidents only serving to bring out the humorous traits and notions of the different characters (Mr. Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, &c.), and to give occasion to humorous rhapsodies on the part of the author. In "Tristram Shandy" the humor tends to the side of satire, while in "The Sentimental Journey" it tends to the side of sentiment and pathos. The well-known episode on the dead donkey, and the story of the captive, exhibit this phase of Sterne's humor. We extract the former: —

"The mourner was sitting upon a stone bench at the door, with an ass's pannel and its bridle on one side, which he took up from time to time, then laid them down, looked at them, and shook his head. He then took his crust of bread out of his wallet again, as if to eat it, held it some time in his hand, then laid it upon the bit of his ass's bridle, looked wistfully at the little arrangement he had made, and

then gave a sigh. The simplicity of his grief drew numbers about him, and La Fleur among the rest, whilst the horses were getting ready; as I continued sitting in the post-chaise, I could see and hear over their heads.

"He said he had come last from Spain, where he had been from the farthest borders of Franconia; and had got so far on his return home when his ass died. Every one seemed desirous to know what business could have taken so old and poor a man so far a journey from his own home. It had pleased Heaven, he said, to bless him with three sons, the finest lads in all Germany; but having in one week lost two of the eldest of them by the small-pox, and the youngest falling ill of the same distemper, he was afraid of being bereft of them all, and made a vow, if Heaven would not take him from him also, he would go, in gratitude, to St. Iago in Spain. When the mourner got thus far on his story, he stopped to pay nature his tribute, and wept bitterly. He said Heaven had accepted the conditions, and that he had set out from his cottage with this poor creature, who had been a patient partner of his journey; that it had ate the same bread with him all the way, and was unto him as a friend.

"Everybody who stood about heard the poor fellow with concern: La Fleur offered him money. The mourner said he did not want it; it was not the value of the ass, but the loss of him. The ass, he said, he was assured loved him; and upon this he told them a long story of a mischance upon their passage over the Pyrenean Mountains, which had separated them from each other three days; during which time the ass had sought him as much as he had sought the ass; and they had scarce either ate or drunk till they met. 'Thou hast one comfort, at least,' said I, 'in the loss of thy poor beast: I'm sure thou hast been a merciful master to him.' — 'Alas!' said the mourner, 'I thought so when he was alive; but, now that he is dead, I think otherwise; I fear the weight of myself and my afflictions together have been too much for him; they have shortened the poor creature's days, and I fear I have them to answer for.' 'Shame on the world!' said I to myself. 'Did we but love each other as this poor soul loved his ass, 'twould be something.' "

For pure wit Sydney Smith stands unrivalled among English prose-writers. He was a sincere and earnest liberal in politics, inheriting from Burke and other leading members of the opposition to Lord North's government the principles, some of which they had been the first to establish, while others were derived from the Puritans of the seventeeth century. In religion, he

takes up the utilitarian, common-sense, rationalizing tone of the eighteenth century. Methodism is, in his eyes, a miserable imposture, a vulgar fanaticism; religion, unless rich, respectable, and prudent, unless countenanced by the well-educated and the well-to-do classes, presented itself to him in the light of a nuisance rather than otherwise. His exertions on behalf of the enfranchisement of the Irish Catholics ought never to be forgotten. This question forms the subject of "Peter Plymley's Letters," written in 1807, in which solid reasoning is conveyed in a form so piquant, so irresistibly witty and racy, that even political opponents must have read them with delight. Peter Plymley writes to his brother Abraham, the Protestant clergyman of a country parish in Ireland; and, amongst other things, disposes in the following fashion of the charge — not yet quite obsolete — which it was then customary to bring against the Irish Catholics, because they did not, instead of demanding entire civil and religious equality, overflow with gratitude to their rulers for the partial relief which they had already obtained. The sixth letter opens thus: —

"DEAR ABRAHAM, — What amuses me the most is to hear of the *indulgences* which the Catholics have received, and their exorbitance in not being satisfied with those indulgences. Now, if you complain to me that a man is obtrusive and shameless in his requests, and that it is impossible to bring him to reason, I must first of all hear the whole of your conduct towards him; for you may have taken from him so much in the first instance, that, in spite of a long series of restitution, a vast latitude for petition may still remain behind.

"There is a village (no matter where) in which the inhabitants, on one day in the year, sit down to a dinner prepared at the common expense. By an extraordinary piece of tyranny (which Lord Hawkesbury would call the wisdom of the village ancestors), the inhabitants of three of the streets, about a hundred years ago, seized upon the inhabitants of the fourth street, bound them hand and foot, laid them upon their backs, and compelled them to look on while the rest were stuffing themselves with beef and beer; the next year, the

inhabitants of the persecuted street, though they contributed an equal quota of the expense, were treated precisely in the same manner. The tyranny grew into a custom; and (as the manner of our nature is) it was considered as the most sacred of all duties to keep these poor fellows without their annual dinner. The village was so tenacious of this practice, that nothing could induce them to resign it; every enemy to it was looked upon as a disbeliever in Divine Providence; any nefarious churchwarden who wished to succeed in his election had nothing to do but to represent his antagonist as an abolitionist, in order to frustrate his ambition, endanger his life, and throw the village into a state of the most dreadful commotion. By degrees, however, the obnoxious street grew to be so well peopled, and its inhabitants so firmly united, that their oppressors, more afraid of injustice, were more disposed to be just. At the next dinner they are unbound; the year after, allowed to sit upright; then a bit of bread and a glass of water; till, at last, after a long series of concessions, they are emboldened to ask, in pretty plain terms, that they may be allowed to sit down at the bottom of the table, and to fill their bellies as well as the rest. Forthwith a general cry of shame and scandal: 'Ten years ago, were you not laid upon your backs? Don't you remember what a great thing you thought it to get a piece of bread? How thankful you were for cheese-parings! Have you forgotten that memorable era when the lord of the manor interfered to obtain for you a slice of the public pudding? And now, with an audacity only equalled by your ingratitude, you have the impudence to ask for knives and forks, and to request, in terms too plain to be mistaken, that you may sit down to table with the rest, and be indulged even with beef and beer. There are not more than half a dozen dishes which we have reserved for ourselves: the rest has been thrown open to you in the utmost profusion; you have potatoes and carrots, suet dumplings, sops in the pan, and delicious toast and water, in incredible quantities. Beef, mutton, lamb, pork, and veal are ours; and, if you were not the most restless and dissatisfied of human beings, you would never think of aspiring to enjoy them.'

"Is not this, my dainty Abraham, the very nonsense and the very insult which is talked to and practised upon the Catholics?"

The temptation to quote just one good thing out of the many hundreds which the lively canon scattered around him is irresistible. It occurs in a note to the third of these same letters of Peter Plymley. "Fanaticism," says Peter, —

"Is Mr. Canning's term for the detection of public abuses, — a term invented by him, and adopted by that simious parasite who is always grinning at his heels. Nature descends down to infinite smallness. Mr. Canning has his parasites; and if you take a large buzzing blue-bottle fly, and look at it in a microscope, you may see twenty or thirty little ugly insects crawling about it, which doubtless think their fly to be the bluest, grandest, merriest, most important animal in the universe, and are convinced the world would be at an end if it ceased to buzz."

3. Oratory, Journalism, Pamphleteering.

Oratory is of three kinds,—that of the pulpit, that of the bar, and that of the public assembly, or of the tribune, to use a convenient French term.

When the oratory of the pulpit addresses itself to questions purely religious and moral, or when it interprets Scripture, it is called homiletics, or preaching, and must be considered in connection with theology. When it deals with political questions, or celebrates the virtues of individuals, it becomes in the strict sense a branch of oratory. The political sermon and the funeral oration are as much a part of eloquence as the advocate's address, or the speech from the hustings; the chief difference lying in the conditions of delivery, which give to the pulpit orator leisure for careful preparation, and preclude the possibility of reply.

In this kind of oratory the great names which France can boast of immediately occur to us: Boucher and the preachers of the League, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon. In English literature we have little that requires notice but the political sermons and funeral orations of Jeremy Taylor, and some sermons by South. Taylor's sermon at the funeral of Archbishop Bramhall has some fine passages; yet his success in this kind of composition was, on the whole, inconsiderable.

The oratory of the bar differs from that of the pulpit and the tribune in that the conditions under which it

exists oblige it ordinarily to take for its guiding and animating lights, not general moral principles, but legal maxims and decisions; and, even in cases where an appeal to general principles is admissible, to give them always a special and immediate application. A certain relative inferiority hence attaches to this kind of eloquence. It is not ordinarily that of the convinced mind communicating its convictions to others for some high purpose, whether that be the exhibition of pure truth, or the maintenance of the public welfare, or at lowest the defence of party principles; but that of the advocate whose single aim it is to make out his case, and advance the interests of his client. Exceptional cases, however are not uncommon — as on the trials of eminent public men or notorious criminals — in which the advocate appears as the vindicator of human or divine justice, and discharges a function of great dignity. Of this nature are the orations of Cicero against Verres and Catiline, and, among ourselves, the speeches of Burke on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. But the instances are more common in which lawyers in public trials have been the instruments of royal suspicion or party hate. Never was eloquence more shamefully prostituted than by Coke in his prosecution of Raleigh, or by Bacon when he appeared against his benefactor Essex.

The oratory of the public assembly is illustrated in English literature by a long roll of historic names, some of which are not unlikely to rival in perpetuity of renown the names of the great orators of antiquity. Far above all others rises the eloquence of Burke. The following extract from his "Speech at Bristol previous to the Election" in 1780 refers to the demoralizing effects of the penal laws against the Catholics: —

"In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate, but they are obliged to fly from their very species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected. Their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant who waits behind your chair the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and abase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so to get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail distemper of a contagious servitude, to keep him above ground an animated mass of putrefaction, corrupted himself, and corrupting all about him."

The eulogium upon Sir George Savile, a little farther on, has a terse and classic turn of expression, which our language, from its want of inflections, has rarely attained to: —

"I hope that few things which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life have wholly escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius, with an understanding vigorous and acute and refined and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is among the largest, — a fortune which wholly unincumbered as it is with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser. This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in and the last out of the House of Commons, he passes from the senate to the camp; and, seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in the senate to serve his country, or in the field to defend it."

The function of the journalist so far resembles that of the orator, that his object also is to produce imme-

diate conviction or persuasion, with a view to action. But he speaks to his audience through the broad sheet, not by word of mouth. The extensive use of this mode of address in modern times is attributable partly to the populousness and geographical extent of modern communities, partly to the increased diffusion of a certain grade of culture, partly also to the invention of a variety of mechanical contrivances, met by corresponding social arrangements, by which the journalist is enabled to address his readers at *regular* and *brief* intervals. At Athens the sovereign people all resided within easy reach of the Pnyx or the Dionysiac theatre, so that the orators who led them could reach them through their ears, and were not compelled, like our journalists, to appeal to citizens living at a distance, through the eye. It must be noted that the journalist, and the circulator of news, though the two offices are usually combined in practice, have distinct functions in theory. Newspapers originated, as the name itself implies, in the attempt to discharge the humbler office, that of collecting and disseminating news. But as the demand for correct and frequent intelligence increased, and the means of supplying it were also multiplied, the conductors of newspapers naturally seized the opportunity thus afforded them of accompanying their news with their own comments and explanations. It is from the power and social influence which the able use of these opportunities has secured to it, that the newspaper press has received the name of the *Fourth Estate*, and that journalism has almost risen to the dignity of a profession. At the present day the journalist sometimes discards the business of a circulator of news altogether, as in the instance of "The Saturday Review." The newspaper, as originally understood, is now represented only by government and mercantile

The pamphlet, whether its ends be political or politico-religious, is equivalent to an elaborate speech, which by means of the printing-press obtains a diffusion immeasurably exceeding that which oral delivery can accomplish. In a country where the press is free, this indirect kind of oratory is sure to be largely resorted to, especially in times of political agitation; and many an eager political theorist, whom compulsory silence would have turned into a conspirator, has relieved his excitement by writing, and proved innocuous as a pamphleteer. The civil war of the seventeenth century, the reign of Anne, and the fifty years terminating in 1835, are the periods at which pamphleteering has most flourished amongst us. We will give a specimen from a work of each period. Few pamphlets composed in the first have much literary value, except the politico-religious tracts of Milton. The following extract forms a portion of his eulogy upon the Long Parliament in the "Apology for Smectymnuus:"—

"With such a majesty had their wisdom begirt itself, that whereas others had levied war to subdue a nation that sought for peace, they sitting here in peace could so many miles extend the force of their single words as to overawe the dissolute stoutness of an armed power, secretly stirred up and almost hired against them. And having by a solemn protestation vowed themselves and the kingdom anew to God and his service, and, by a prudent foresight above what their fathers thought on, prevented the dissolution and frustration of their designs by an untimely breaking-up; notwithstanding all the treasonous plots against them, all the rumors either of rebellion or invasion, they have not been yet brought to change their constant resolution, ever to think fearlessly of their own safeties, and hopefully of the commonwealth; which hath gained them such an admiration from all good men that now they hear it as their ordinary surname to be saluted the fathers of their country, and sit as gods among daily petitions and public thanks flowing in upon them. Which doth so little yet exalt them in their own thoughts, that with all gentle affability and courteous acceptance they both receive and return that tribute of thanks which is tendered them, testifying their zeal and desire to spend themselves, as it were, piecemeal upon the grievances

and wrongs of their distressed nation; insomuch that the meanest artisans and laborers, at other times also women, and often the younger sort of servants, assembling with their complaints, and that sometimes in a less humble guise than for petitioners, have come with confidence that neither their meanness would be rejected, nor their simplicity contemned, nor yet their urgency distasted, either by the dignity, wisdom, or moderation of that supreme senate: nor did they depart unsatisfied."

The next extract is from Swift's "Conduct of the Allies," a pamphlet published in 1712. By the "reigning favorites" are meant Godolphin and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The war of the Spanish succession was now practically over; the ministry which carried it on had been dismissed; and Swift's object was to reconcile men's minds to the peace which the new ministry were endeavoring to negotiate, by enlarging on the wasteful and corrupt manner in which the nation had been plunged in debt in order to carry on a war which benefited only the allies, the English general, and the capitalists.

"But, when the war was thus begun, there soon fell in other incidents here at home, which made the continuance of it necessary for those who were the chief advisers. The Whigs were at that time out of all credit or consideration: the reigning favorites had always carried what was called the Tory principle at least as high as our constitution could bear, and most others in great employments were wholly in the Church interest. These last, among whom several were persons of the greatest merit, quality, and consequence, were not able to endure the many instances of pride, insolence, avarice, and ambition which those favorites began so early to discover, nor to see them presuming to be the sole dispensers of the royal favor. However, their opposition was to no purpose: they wrestled with too great a power, and were soon crushed under it. For those in possession, finding they could never be quiet in their usurpations while others had any credit who were at least upon an equal foot of merit, began to make overtures to the discarded Whigs, who would be content with any terms of accommodation. Thus commenced this *Solemn League and Covenant*, which hath ever since been cultivated with so much zeal and application. The great traders in money were wholly devoted to the Whigs, who had first raised them. The army, the court, and the

treasury continued under the old despotic administration: the Whigs were received into employment, left to manage the parliament, cry down the landed interest, and worry the Church. Meantime our allies, who were not ignorant that all this artificial structure had no true foundation in the hearts of the people, resolved to make their best use of it as long as it should last. And, the general's credit being raised to a great height at home by our success at Flanders, the Dutch began their gradual impositions, lessening their quotas, breaking their stipulations, garrisoning the towns we took for them, without supplying their troops, with many other infringements; all which we were forced to submit to, because the general was *made easy*, because the moneyed men at home were fond of the war, because the Whigs were not yet firmly settled, and because the exorbitant degree of power which was built upon a supposed necessity of employing particular persons would go off in a peace. It is needless to add that the emperor and other princes followed the example of the Dutch, and succeeded as well for the same reasons."

Among the innumerable tracts and pamphlets produced in the third period, the following passage is selected almost at random. It is from a pamphlet written by Lord Byron in 1821, in the form of a letter to a friend in England, examining the Rev. W. Bowles's strictures on the life and writings of Pope. The passage is interesting, as embodying one great poet's deliberate estimate of another: —

"Of Pope I have expressed my opinion elsewhere, as also of the effects which the present attempts at poetry have had upon our literature. If any great national or natural convulsion could or should overwhelm your country in such sort as to sweep Great Britain from the kingdoms of the earth, and leave only that, after all, the most living of human things, — a *dead language*, — to be studied and read and imitated by the wise of future and far generations upon foreign shores; if your literature should become the learning of mankind, divested of party cabals, temporary fashions, and national pride and prejudice, — an Englishman, anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British epic and tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakspeare and Milton; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. He is the only poet that never shocks, the only poet whose *faultlessness* has been made his reproach. Cast your eye over his productions; consider their extent, and contemplate their variety, — pastoral, passion, mock-heroic, translation, satire, ethics; all excellent, and often perfect."

4. History, Contemporary and Retrospective.

Under this general heading we include true narratives of all kinds. For the faithful record of any actual human experience whatever may be regarded as a work subsidiary to, and promotive of, the end of history proper; which is, the representation of the evolution either of the general life of mankind (universal history), or of the life of some one nation in particular. Biography of every description is thus included among the departments subsidiary to history. Indeed, it has been proved by some late brilliant examples (in the case of Macaulay's England, for instance), that the historian who rightly understands his business can glean nearly as much material suitable for his purpose from the lives of private persons, as from those of princes, statesmen, or generals. Accounts of voyages and travels are also, though more remotely, subsidiary to history. The observations of an intelligent traveller in civilized countries are obviously of the highest value to the historian. Arthur Young's "Travels in France before the Revolution," and Laing's "Notes of a Traveller," are cases in point. And even the descriptions given by the first explorers of wild uninhabited regions are subsidiary to the history of later generations. To the historian of America, the narrative of Raleigh's blind and struggling progress along the swampy coasts of North Carolina, while engaged in laying the foundations of the colony of Virginia, cannot fail to be of the highest use and interest. So, when the history of the Australian colonies comes to be written, the works of Mitchell, Sturt, Grey, Leichhardt, and other hardy explorers, will assuredly furnish a large portion of the matter of its introductory chapters.

History proper is of two kinds: 1, contemporary; 2, retrospective or reflective. A third kind — philosophi-

cal history — has been added by some German metaphysicians.[1] By this is meant the scientific exhibition of the manner in which the state of human society in any given generation inevitably causes, through the operation of physical laws, the state of society found in the next generation. As, however, the life of a nation or of the race is evolved by human actions, and it has not yet been proved, however confidently asserted, by these philosophers, that such actions are subject to physical necessity (in other words, that the human will is not free), those who believe in the opposite doctrines of responsibility and free-will will not be disposed to admit the possibility of history being correctly written upon such an hypothesis.

1. Under the description of contemporary history are comprised, in English literature, many works which from the literary point of view are nearly worthless, together with a few which are of rare excellence. The former character applies to the contemporary portions of our old English chronicles, — Fabyan, Hall, Grafton, Holinshed, Stowe, &c. Ludlow's and Whitlocke's "Memoirs," relating to the civil war of Charles I.'s time, though much superior to these, are flat in style, and dull through deficiency of descriptive power. Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion" is the most perfect contemporary history that we possess; next to it may be named Burnet's "History of his Own Times," and Horace Walpole's "Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II."

Clarendon's history is a work with which the student of our literature should make himself familiar. It is, indeed, very long; but the theme is one so deeply interesting, and the revolution which it records has so decisively influenced the whole course of our history down

[1] See Hegel's Philosophie der Geschichte.

to the present day, that he may be excused for spending some time over it. There are many digressions, too (Clarendon is partial to them), which if necessary may be omitted. Of course the book is not impartial, or entirely trustworthy; for, not only was the author a keen partisan on the royalist side: he was also a lawyer, and had a legal turn of mind, and was thence disqualified to a certain degree from weighing the conduct and aims of the different parties in even scales. The Puritans on the one hand, and the Roman Catholics on the other, were pursuing objects which the law of the land, in establishing the Church of England, had condemned; and this is reason enough with Clarendon for branding those objects as bad, and their pursuit as criminal. For instance, he thus speaks of the infamous sentence passed on Prynne and his fellow-sufferers, referred to above, at p. 155: —

"These three persons (Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton) having been, for several follies and libelling humors, first gently reprehended, and after, for their incorrigibleness, more severely censured and imprisoned, found some means in prison of correspondence, which was not before known to be between them; and to combine themselves in a more pestilent and seditious libel than they had ever before vented; in which the honor of the king, queen, counsellors, and bishops was with equal license blasted and traduced; which was faithfully dispersed by their proselytes in the city. The authors were quickly and easily known, and had, indeed, too much ingenuity to deny it, and were thereupon brought together to the Star Chamber, *ore tenus*, where they behaved themselves with marvellous insolence, with full confidence demanding 'that the bishops who sat in the court' (being only the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London) 'might not be present, because they were their enemies, and so parties;' which, how scandalous and ridiculous soever it seemed then there, was good logic and good law two years after in Scotland, and served to banish the bishops of that kingdom both from the council table and the assembly. Upon a very patient and solemn hearing, in as full a court as ever I saw in that place, without any difference in opinion or dissenting voice, they were all three censured as scandalous, seditious, and infamous persons, 'to lose their ears in the pillory, and to be imprisoned in several jails during the king's pleasure:' all which was executed with rigor and severity enough.

But whatever defects, whether of matter or manner, may be alleged against this work, the style is so attractive, — has such an equable, easy, and dignified flow, — that it can never cease to be popular. Perhaps Clarendon's greatest merit is his skill in character-drawing. Take, for example, the character of Hampden: —

"He was a gentleman of good family in Buckinghamshire, and born to a fair fortune, and of a most civil and affable demeanor. In his entrance into the world he indulged to himself all the license in sports, and exercises, and company, which was used by men of the most jolly conversation. Afterwards he retired to a more reserved and melancholy society, yet preserving his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a flowing courtesy to all men. Though they who conversed nearly with him found him growing into a dislike of the ecclesiastical government of the Church, yet most believed it rather a dislike of some churchmen, and of some introducements of theirs, which he apprehended might disquiet the public peace. He was rather of reputation in his own country than of public discourse or fame in the kingdom, before the business of ship-money; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and property of the kingdom, and rescue his country, as he thought, from being made a prey to the court. His carriage throughout this agitation was with that rare temper and modesty, that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony. And the judgment that was given against him infinitely more advanced him than the service for which it was given. When this parliament began (being returned knight of the shire for the county where he lived), the eyes of all men were fixed on him as their *patriæ pater*, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time was greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man in his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided that no corrupt or private ends could bias them.

. . . . . .

After he was among those members accused by the king of high treason, he was much altered; his nature and carriage seeming much fiercer than it did before. And, without question, when he first drew the sword he threw away the scabbard; for he passionately opposed the overture made by the king for a treaty from Nottingham, and, as

eminently, any expedients that might have produced any accommodations in this that was at Oxford; and was principally relied on to prevent any infusions which might be made into the Earl of Essex towards peace, or to render them ineffectual if they were made; and was, indeed, much more relied on by that party than the general himself. In the first entrance into the troubles he undertook the command of a regiment of foot, and performed the duty of a colonel on all occasions most punctually. He was very temperate in diet, and a supreme governor over all his passions and affections, and had thereby a great power over other men's. He was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle or sharp, and of a personal courage equal to his best parts; so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend, and as much to be apprehended where he was so as any man could deserve to be. And therefore his death was no less pleasing to the one party than it was condoled in the other. In a word, what was said of Cinna might well be applied to him, — "He had a head to contrive, and a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute, any mischief." His death, therefore, seemed to be a great deliverance to the nation."

Burnet's "Own Times" is a work that is full of inaccuracies, and does not rise above the level of a plain conversational style; it, however, throws much valuable light on the history of civil transactions in England and Scotland during the latter half of the seventeenth century. This writer also is graphic, and probably faithful, in his delineations of character.

Horace Walpole, son of the Whig statesman Sir Robert Walpole, had a near view during his long life of the secret machinery by which the state policy of Britain was set in motion; and we have the results of his observation in his "Memoirs" above mentioned, as well as in the lively and lengthy series of his "Letters." But Horace, though polished and keen, is by no means a genial writer: selfish himself, he did not much believe in human disinterestedness; and, without the large intellectual grasp of Gibbon, he was destitute of those strong human sympathies and antipathies which impart a certain interest to the works of much inferior men.

2. Retrospective history may be either legendary or evidential; by which is meant, history, the statements of which on matters of fact rest on probable moral evidence. The legendary history relates events supposed to occur at distant periods, the evidence for which is mere popular tradition. In such a history, no event, or connection of events, no names or genealogies, can be accepted as accurately corresponding to reality. Yet as there are usually certain grains of historic truth deducible from even the most imaginative of these histories, and as the writers at any rate suppose themselves to be relaters of fact, not fiction, the reader must not confound this class of works with fictitious narratives. Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Historia Britonum" is a pure legendary history. All the old English chroniclers begin their histories just as Livy does, with legendary recitals, of which Geoffrey's work is the principal source. In most of them a portion of retrospective history succeeds, compiled from the writings of their predecessors. This is followed by the narrative of contemporary events, which is usually the only portion of such works that has any value.

Retrospective histories of the evidential class proceed upon the same principles, whether they treat of ancient or of modern civilization. The same critical rules are appealed to in each case for the purpose of testing the credibility of the witnesses, ascertaining the dates, or other circumstances connected with the composition of documents; in short, for accomplishing the great end of this kind of historical writing, which is to paint a past age as it really was. We proceed to notice the chief works of this class in English literature, proceeding from ancient to modern history.

"The History of the World," by Raleigh, professes to describe the course of events in the chief countries

of the ancient world, from the Creation to the fall of the Macedonian kingdom in 168 B.C. Some account of the manner in which the design is executed has been given at a previous page.[1] The most remarkable passages are those in which the chivalrous old campaigner illustrates the details of Macedonian or Roman battles, by referring to scenes in his own varied and turbulent life. Now and then the style rises to a very clear and noble strain, as in the following sentences, with which the work concludes: —

"By this, which we have already set down, is seen the beginning and end of the three first monarchies of the world, whereof the founders and erecters thought that they could never have ended. That of Rome, which made the fourth, was also at this time almost at the highest. We have left it flourishing in the middle of the field, having rooted up or cut down all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world; but, after some continuance, it shall begin to lose the beauty it had; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another, her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither, and a rabble of barbarous nations enter the field, and cut her down.

. . . . . .

"For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one; but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed: God, which hath made him, and loves him, is always deferred. 'I have considered,' saith Solomon, 'all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;' but who believes it till Death tells it us? . . . O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and,

[1] See p. 130.

whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*"

Mr. Mitford was the first Englishman who attempted, in emulation of Gibbon, to write at length the history of Greece. Dr. Thirlwall and Mr. Grote have followed more ably and exhaustively over the same ground; but as we do not propose to comment upon works by authors living, or lately deceased, we abstain from the attempt to describe or appreciate their labors.

In Roman history, Hooke, the friend of Pope, was first in the field; and to him succeeded Dr. Ferguson, with his dry book on the Roman republic.

The vast sweep taken in "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" exhibits Gibbon's wonderful capacity, not only for mastering and reproducing the sequence and connection of events through a long and obscure period in the principal countries of Europe and Asia, but also for dealing with what may be called the *statics* of the subject in those detailed, consistent, and luminous pictures which he draws of the state of society as existing in a particular country at a particular time. The main body of the work commences with the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98), and ends with the fall of the Eastern empire (A.D. 1453); but three supplementary chapters "review the state and revolutions of the Roman city" (to which, it will be remembered, Gibbon had limited his original design) from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. But, though it is difficult to speak too highly of the genius displayed in this memorable work, it must be added that the fidelity of the historical picture which it exhibits is greatly marred by the Sadducean scepticism of the writer. When a Christian bishop or doctor, or a religious king,

comes before his field of vision, it is not in Gibbon to be just; he can not or will not believe that such a man was any thing more than a compound of enthusiasm and superstition, in whom morality was always ready to give way to ecclesiastical considerations; and his sneering cavils seem to leave their trail upon the purest virtue, the most exalted heroism, which the times that he writes of produced for the instruction of mankind. He is in thorough sympathy with no one except Julian the Apostate. Again, his ardent attachment to the civilization and literature of Greece and Rome involved him in a partial blindness and unfairness to the immense importance of the part played by the Teutonic race in modern history; and this unfairness does certainly, to some extent, affect the general value of his history, considered as a trustworthy picture of a great sequence of events.

Dr. Arnold's unfinished Roman history, based upon that of Niebuhr, extends from the founding of the city to the middle of the second Punic war. Two additional volumes, written at an earlier period, but not published till after the author's death, carry on the history of the Roman Commonwealth from the close of the second Punic war to the death of Augustus, with a separate chapter on the reign of Trajan.

Among those who have written the history of England, Scotland, or Ireland, it is impossible to do more than mention a few prominent names.

Sir Thomas More's "History of the Reign of Edward V." is a youthful and rhetorical production, which, according to Horace Walpole, who, in his "Historic Doubts respecting Richard III.," has sifted the whole matter very ably, will nowhere stand a critical examination and confrontation with the original authorities. Lord Bacon's "History of Henry VII.," though com-

posed in a homely style, is a masterly work. Men's motives are deeply probed, and their actions wisely weighed; laws and events affecting the course of trade, the progress of agriculture, and the welfare of particular classes of society, are carefully recorded and examined; truth without disguise seems to be the writer's paramount design; and characters are drawn as by an eye that saw all, and a hand that could paint all. Milton's "History of England" is a mere fragment. Neal's "History of the Puritans," and another of "New England" by the same author, are both valuable works, because carefully based on documentary and oral evidence. But the most eminent historians of the seventeenth century belong to the contemporary class.

In the next century, and down to 1850, we can barely mention the names of Rapin, Carte, Lord Hailes, Belsham, and Adolphus. Hume's clear and manly style would have insured to his "History of England" a longer pre-eminence, had not his indolence allowed inaccuracies and a want of references to deform his work. Robertson's "History of Scotland" is pleasant reading, but uncritical. The work similarly entitled by Sir Walter Scott embraces all the earlier portions of the history, from A.D. 80 to the accession of Mary Queen of Scots, which Robertson had omitted. Moore's "History of Ireland" is a work unworthy of his genius. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," embracing the period from the conversion of the Irish by St. Patrick, to the loss of their national independence in the twelfth century, is a calm, dispassionate, and profoundly learned work.

No very signal success has been achieved by English writers in compiling histories of modern Continental states. Knolles's "History of the Turks" must be named under this head; and Coxe's "Memoirs of the

House of Austria," and Russell's "Modern Europe," and Roscoe's "Lorenzo de Medici." Here also must be placed Arnold's "Introductory Lectures on Modern History," which contain several brilliant isolated sketches. One such passage we extract: —

"Ten years afterwards there broke out by far the most alarming danger of universal dominion which had ever threatened Europe. The most military people in Europe became engaged in a war for their very existence. Invasion on the frontiers, civil war and all imaginable horrors raging within, the ordinary relations of life went to wrack, and every Frenchman became a soldier. It was a multitude numerous as the hosts of Persia, but animated by the courage and skill and energy of the old Romans. One thing alone was wanting, that which Pyrrhus said the Romans wanted to enable them to conquer the world, — a general and a ruler like himself. There was wanted a master hand to restore and maintain peace at home, and to concentrate and direct the immense military resources of France against her foreign enemies. And such an one appeared in Napoleon. Pacifying La Vendée, receiving back the emigrants, restoring the Church, remodelling the law, personally absolute, yet carefully preserving and maintaining all the great points which the nation had won at the Revolution, Napoleon united in himself not only the power, but the whole will of France; and that power and will were guided by a genius for war such as Europe had never seen since Cæsar. The effect was absolutely magical. In November, 1799, he was made First Consul; he found France humbled by defeats, his Italian conquests lost, his allies invaded, his own frontier threatened. He took the field in May, 1800; and in June the whole fortune of the war was changed, and Austria driven out of Lombardy by the victory of Marengo. Still the flood of the tide rose higher and higher, and every successive wave of its advance swept away a kingdom. Earthly state has never reached a prouder pinnacle than when Napoleon, in June, 1812, gathered his army at Dresden, and there received the homage of subject kings. And, now, what was the principal adversary of this tremendous power? by whom was it checked, and resisted, and put down? By none, and by nothing, but the direct and manifest interposition of God! I know of no language so well fitted to describe that victorious advance to Moscow, and the utter humiliation of the retreat, as the language of the prophet with respect to the advance and subsequent destruction of the host of Sennacherib."

Orme, Mill, and Elphinstone are the chief authorities for the history of India. The first two confine their

attention to British India; but Elphinstone's work treats chiefly to the times anterior to European occupation. For the history of the colonial dependencies of European states, Robertson in his "History of America," and Bryan Edwards, author of a history of Jamaica, are the only names of much importance. Prescott, Bancroft, and other American writers, have ably taken up that portion of the subject which relates to the American Continent.

Mr. James and Capt. Brenton have written the naval history of Britain. The latter has the advantage in style, the former in accuracy and clearness of arrangement. Sir William Napier's "History of the Peninsular War" is a work of the highest order. We cannot resist the temptation of transcribing one of the many glowing and eloquent passages with which it abounds. It refers to the closing struggle of the battle of Albuera: —

"The conduct of a few brave men soon changed this state of affairs. Col. Robert Arbuthnot, pushing between the double fire of the mistaken troops, arrested that mischief; while Cole, with the fusiliers, flanked by a battalion of the Lusitanian Legion under Col. Hawkshawe, mounted the hill, dispersed the lancers, recovered the captured guns, and appeared on the right of Houghton's brigade exactly as Abercrombie passed it on the left.

"Such a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's heavy masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory: they wavered, hesitated, and then, vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavored to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed; Cole, and the three colonels, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe, fell wounded; and the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships. Suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed with their terrible enemies; and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult by voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the noblest veterans, extricating themselves from the crowded columns, sacrifice their lives

to gain time for the mass to bear up on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen, hovering upon their flank, threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valor, no nervous enthusiasm, weakened the stability of their order; their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front; their measured tread shook the ground; their murderous volleys swept away the head of every formation; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries which arose from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as foot by foot, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigor of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves, joining with the struggling multitude, endeavor to sustain the fight: their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion; and the mighty mass, giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discolored with blood; and fifteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

Biography: its Divisions; Diaries, Letters.

This branch of literature opens with autobiographies, which, when well executed, constitute its most valuable and interesting portion. We have little to set by the side of the charming "Mémoires," in innumerable volumes, which form so piquant a portion of the literature of France. Scott's fragment of autobiography, printed at the beginning of the "Life" by Lockhart, is admirable; but unfortunately it is only a fragment, and breaks off when the hero has reached his twentieth year. A similar fragment by Southey, though longer, makes less progress, for it terminates at the fifteenth year; nor do we much regret its unfinished state. Gibbon's "Memoirs" are much in the French style and manner, and form, perhaps, the most interesting and best executed autobiography that we possess. Hume also, and Priestley, have each given us an account of his life and opinions. Baxter's unwieldy "Reliquiæ Baxterianæ," or narrative of the most memorable passages of his life and times, has been already mentioned (see p. 206).

1. In biography exclusive of autobiography, we may distinguish, 1, general compilations; 2, national compilations; 3, class biographies; 4, personal biographies. Of the first kind, it is to our reproach that until the last few years we have had no specimen deserving of mention. To the "Biographie Universelle" and the "Conversations-Lexicon," we had for a long time nothing to oppose but the insignificant compilations of Aikin, Grainger, and Gorton. Alexander Chalmers was the first to bring out a biographical dictionary of some pretension; but even in this the omissions are numerous and important.

2. Of the second kind, we have the "Biographia Britannica," a work of great research, though with many serious omissions. The original edition embraced the entire alphabet; but its defects were so glaring as to determine Dr. Kippis and others to undertake a re-issue of the work upon an enlarged scale; the new edition, however, was never carried further than the commencement of the letter F. Fuller's "Worthies of England," noticed at p. 205, is a work of the same description.

3. Of class biographies — not to mention the Latin works of Leland, Bale, and Pitseus, "De Illustribus Britanniæ Scriptoribus" — the chief examples are, Walton's "Lives of Anglican Divines," including Hooker, Donne, and Sanderson; Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," which is a collection of short memoirs of Oxford men; Johnson's "Lives of the Poets;" and Hartley Coleridge's "Biographia Borealis," or "Lives of Northern Worthies." From Johnson's account of Gray, we extract a passage strongly characteristic of his peculiar style: —

"'The Bard' appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original; and, if preference depends

on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in 'The Bard' more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent; and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi.*

"To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that 'The Bard' promotes any truth, moral or political.

"His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

"Of the first stanza, the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of every man to rush abruptly upon his subject that has read the ballad of 'Johnny Armstrong,' —

'Is there ever a man in all Scotland.'

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, 'ruin, ruthless, helm, or hauberk,' are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavors at sublimity."

4. Among personal biographies, Boswell's "Life of Johnson" holds confessedly the first place. Next to it in point of literary value, but of equal if not greater intrinsic interest, comes Lockhart's "Life of Scott." It must be owned that we English have not done that part of our hero-worship particularly well, which consists in writing good lives of our heroes. Shakspeare's life was never written at all. Toland's and Philips's lives of Milton, and Noble's memoirs of Cromwell and his family, all fall far beneath their subjects. Ruffhead's "Life of Pope" is utterly contemptible. Dryden and Swift have fared better, having found a competent and zealous biographer in Scott. Southey also gained much credit by his biographies of Wesley and Nelson; and it may be said generally that during the

present century we have done much to make up for our past deficiencies in this department. Scott's "Life of Napoleon" is rather a history of the revolutionary period than a personal memoir. Between 1840 and 1850, the most noteworthy biographies that appeared were Arnold's "Life" by Stanley, and the "Life, Diary, and Letters of Mr. Wilberforce," edited by his sons.

Diaries and letters, if published separately, are to be regarded as so much biographical or historical material. The Diary of Burton, a member of the Long Parliament, throws much light on the political history of the time. Those of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, in the reign of Charles II., take a more extensive range; we derive from them much curious information as to the literature, art, manners, and morals of that age. The "Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay," the authoress of "Cecilia," are somewhat disappointing. We have full details of the private life of the court of George III., at which the lively Frances Burney figured in the capacity of a waiting-woman to the queen; but what a dismal court it was! what an absence, not only of gayety and brilliancy, but even of ordinary refinement! In collections of letters, our literature is rather rich. The correspondence of Horace Walpole, that prince of letter-writers, with Sir Horace Mann, the Hon. Seymour Conway, and others; the "Letters and Speeches of Cromwell," edited by Mr. Carlyle; and those of Cowper, by Southey, — are among the chief contributions to this branch of literature. Pope rose in this, as in every other intellectual effort, to the highest excellence; his letters to Swift and others seem to be the perfection of letter-writing. Chesterfield's once-famous Letters to his Son are fast being forgotten.

Theology: its Divisions.

The general character of English theology, which is of course chiefly of Protestant authorship, stamps it as controversial and occasional. Except works of pure learning, its most vigorous and famous productions have all been either defensive or aggressive. They have also been occasional; that is, they have been designed to suit some immediate purpose, and have sprung out of some special conjuncture of circumstances, — differing in this respect from most of the great works of Roman Catholic theologians, at least in latter times, which have usually either been the fruit of the accumulated study and meditation of years, or have grown out of systematic course of lectures.

We may best find a clew through the immense labyrinth of theological literature, by dividing the subject into several branches, and then examining the chief works written by English divines in each branch. These divisions may be thus stated: 1, doctrinal theology; 2, moral theology; 3, hermeneutics and biblical criticism; 4, symbolical; 5, patristic; 6, rationalizing theology; 7, pastoral theology, or homiletics; 8, devotional theology. To these it will be convenient to add, 9, polemics, for the purpose of including a large class of works which draw successively upon all storehouses of theological argument to meet the exigencies of controversy, and cannot, therefore, be fitly classed under any one of the preceding heads.

Pure doctrinal discussions have not, on the whole, found much favor with English divines; at least, unless we go back to the subtile doctor, Duns Scotus, Alexander Hales the Irrefragable, and other great British thinkers of the middle age. An exception, however, must be made to this remark, in favor of the sacramental controversy, on which an immense number of

tracts and treatises have been written. Upon other doctrinal topics the important books that exist may be soon enumerated. They are, Field's "Book of the Church," Bull's "Defensio Fidei Nicenæ," Sherlock's "Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity" written against the Socinians, Wall on "Infant Baptism," and Waterland's "Vindication of Christ's Divinity," in reply to the Arian Dr. Clarke. Of these works, the first three date from the seventeenth, the last two from the eighteenth century. Dr. Richard Field was a favorite with James I., who used to say of him, "Truly this is a *field* which the Lord hath blessed." In his "Book of the Church," written in reply to Stapleton and other Roman Catholic writers, after laying down from Scripture and the fathers the notes of the true Church, he endeavored to show that these notes had been obliterated from the Roman communion, and were all to be found in the Anglican. The discussion is mainly doctrinal, and turns upon the interpretation of the terms "unity," "indefectibility," "sanctity," &c., in which the doctrinal definition of the Church was expressed alike by the High Church Anglicans and their opponents.

Bishop Bull's famous "Defensio" was primarily intended as a reply to Petavius, the learned author of the "Rationarium Temporum," who had remarked that the language held by the fathers of the early Church, prior to the council of Nice, respecting the divinity of the Son, was often loose, ambiguous, and even, if the literal meaning of the words were pressed, heterodox.[1] This statement had been eagerly seized, and made the most of, by Arian and Socinian controversialists. In opposition both to them and to Petavius, Bull maintains

[1] With reference to these fathers, the words addressed by St. Augustine to Theodore the Pelagian should be borne in mind: "Vobis nondum litigantibus, *securius* loquebantur."

in this work the perfect orthodoxy not only of the sentiments, but of the language, of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. In doing so, Mr. Hallam considers that he is not always candid or convincing.

Sherlock's "Vindication" is not a work of very high ability; and it has been said that he lays himself open in it to the imputation of Tritheism. Waterland's book against Arianism, on the other hand, is a very masterly production, and extinguished that opinion in England. Waterland, who died in 1740, was the last great patristical scholar among Anglican divines.[1] But, while he makes what use he can of the appeal to ancient testimonies, the influence exerted by Locke's "Essay" on all subsequent thinkers may be traced in the closer logic and more systematic argumentation with which Waterland — as compared to the writers of the seventeenth century, — deals with the reasonings of Clarke. Wall's treatise on "Infant Baptism" (1705) is a very fair and temperate as well as learned work, the object of which is, first, to prove what was the practice of the early Church with reference to baptism during the first four centuries, and then to urge upon the Baptists, or, as he calls them, Antipædo-Baptists, various considerations touching the evils of disunion, and the ease with which they might, if so disposed, rejoin the Anglican communion.

Moral theology may be generally described as the exhibition of moral science from the religious point of view, and under theological conditions. Casuistry, one of its most important developments, is the application of theology to the solution of difficult questions in morals. Under this head, Taylor's "Ductor Dubitantium" (which he thought the best, but most people

[1] See Dowling's Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical History.

regard as the worst of his works), Perkins's "Cases of Conscience," Sanderson's treatise "De Juramento," and Forbes's "Theologia Moralis," are almost the only works that can be named; and none of them is of great celebrity.

In hermeneutics and biblical criticism, much greater things have been effected. Here we have to name Walton's "Polyglot," consisting of synoptical versions of the Bible in nine languages, and Lightfoot's "Horæ Hebraicæ" and "Harmony of the Four Gospels." Matthew Pool's "Synopsis Criticorum" is an immense compilation of the principal commentaries on the New Testament. In his bulky "Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament," Hammond appears to be almost overpowered by the fulness and extent of his learning, and unable to wield and master it with the readiness displayed by some of his contemporaries. Leighton's "Commentary on St. Peter" is extolled by Coleridge with an unmeasured laudation, to which neither its learning nor its ability appears sufficiently to entitle it.

Symbolical theology treats of the *symbola* or confessional formularies of different religious denominations. Moehler's "Symbolik" will immediately occur to the reader as a classic in this branch of divinity. The Anglican works of this nature are, Pearson's "Exposition of the Apostles' Creed" (1659), and Burnet's work on the Thirty-nine Articles.

But it was in patristic divinity — that branch which examines, compares, and arranges the testimonies borne by the fathers and councils of the early Christian centuries; and more especially in patristic learning, by which we chiefly mean the task of editing the works of the fathers — that the Anglican divines gained their greatest distinctions. In this wide field, all that can be done here — and even that may be of some use —

is to indicate a few of the most important works. We may name, for instance, Fell's edition of Cyprian, and Bishop Potter's edition of Clemens Alexandrinus (a standard work, still unsuperseded), and Pearson's "Vindiciæ Epistolarum S. Ignatii" and "Annales Cyprianici," and Beveridge's "Pandectæ Canonum SS. Apostolorum" (a book of immense learning), and Dodwell's "Dissertations" on SS. Cyprian and Irenæus. In ecclesiastical history and antiquities we have Usher's "Annales," Cave's "Primitive Christianity" (1673) and "Historia Literaria" of ecclesiastical writers from the Christian era to the fourteenth century, and, above all, Bingham's "Origines Ecclesiasticæ; or, Antiquities of the Christian Church" (1708–1722), a work of great research and eminent usefulness. In many of these books there is a controversial element; but in none of them does the writer propose to himself as his main object the establishment of a thesis, or the refutation of an opponent; they are not, therefore, to be classed among polemics.

The seventeenth century is the great time for the patristic writers. The rationalizing divines date, for the most part, from the eighteenth. The former appealed to antiquity and authority in the discussion of disputed questions, the latter to reason and common-sense. Stillingfleet in his "Origines Sacræ; or, a Rational Account of the Grounds of Christian Faith" (1663), directed against Hobbes and the atheists, and again in his "Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion" (1681), against the Catholics, took up the new line of controversy, and may be regarded as individually anticipating the *seculum rationalisticum*. Leslie's "Short Method with the Deists" (1694), Butler's "Analogy," Warburton's "Divine Legation," (1743), Berkeley's "Alciphron" — all of which formed

portions of the great debate on Deism, — together with Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospels," and Paley's "Evidences," the materials for which he took from Lardner, are the chief remaining works to be cited under this head.

In pastoral theology, or homiletics, the number of published volumes of sermons almost defies computation. Among the principal names are, in the seventeenth century, Donné, Andrews, Bramhall, Taylor, Cosin, Hammond, Beveridge, South, and Tillotson; in the eighteenth, Butler, Clark, Wesley, and Whitefield; in the nineteenth, Robert Hall, Rowland Hill, Chalmers, Arnold, Hare, &c.

In devotional theology, though the list is, on the whole, a meagre one, some remarkable books have to be named. Such are William Law's "Serious Call to a Holy Life," the book which made so great an impression on Johnson; Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest" and "Call to the Unconverted;" "The Whole Duty of Man," a work of unknown authorship, but precious in the sight of our forefathers a hundred and fifty years ago, and spoken of in that sense in the "Spectator;" lastly, Taylor's moving and eloquent treatises "Of Holy Living," and "Of Holy Dying." An extract from the latter will enable the reader to form some idea of Taylor's rich and gorgeous style, of the power of his imagination, and the general fulness of his mind. It is upon the shortness of life, and the multitudinous warnings with which it teems, all telling us to prepare to die: —

"All the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton, Time, throws up the earth, and digs a grave where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise

again in a fair or an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world divides between life and death, and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again; and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun; then we sleep, and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world; and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but, during that state, are as disinterested as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years, our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy, and still every seven years it is odds but we shall finish the last scene; and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funeral, first, in those parts that ministered to vice, and, next, in them that served for ornament; and in a short time even they that served for necessity become useless and entangled, like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death; and we have many more of the same signification, — gray hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which Death fed on all night when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon his daily portion of bread and flesh; and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought we die, and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity. We form our words with the breath of our nostrils: we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

"Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it; and God, by all the variety of his providence, makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies and expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest every year, but Death hath two, and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision; and the man that gathers them eats and surfeits, and dies, and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter

minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves."

Of works of which the entire form and end are controversial, the quantity is immense. Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," with the exception of the first book, which we may range with Hallam among contributions to moral and political science, is a vindication of the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church of England, and of her right to impose them, against the attacks of the Puritans. Laud's "Conference with Fisher," Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants," Taylor's "Dissuasive from Popery," about a dozen treatises, large and small, by Baxter, and Barrow "On the Supremacy," are some of the most popular productions of this class.

The circumstances in which Roman Catholics in England and Ireland have been placed since English literature emerged from its rude and semi-barbarous beginnings easily explain the comparative meagreness of their theological literature. Most of the existing works are, as might have been expected, controversial. The writings of Parsons and Allen, Stapleton's ponderous tomes, Gother's works, Milner's "End of Controversy," and some able tracts by Dr. Doyle, mark — if we exclude works by living authors, the Wisemans and Newmans of our own day — some of the most important steps and phases of the great controversy. One or two works of great learning might be named, such as Alford's "Annales Britannici," or of patient research, as Dodd's "Church History," and Alban Butler's "Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principal Saints," &c.

Philosophy; its Divisions: Political Science, Essays, Criticism.

With a brief survey of what English literature has produced under this head, our present task will be concluded.

The term "philosophy," as has been already explained, is here used in a very wide and loose sense, and applied to all works of thought and theory. We commence, however, with the consideration of philosophical works, strictly so called, in examining which we shall endeavor to observe some kind of natural and rational order.

Logic is usually regarded as the fore-court of philosophy, because it is the science which investigates the form of the reasoning principle, philosophy's indispensable instrument, and establishes the conditions of its effective use. The main achievements of English thinkers in this department are, Bacon's "Novum Organum," Whately's "Elements of Logic," Mill's "System of Logic," and Sir William Hamilton's "Lectures."

Lord Bacon — and in this Mr. Mill has followed him — treated logic less as a formal science than as a means to an ulterior end, that end being the successful investigation of nature. The rules which the logic of the schools had established for deductive reasoning, though indisputable, were, in Bacon's view, comparatively worthless, because they could not guide the mind in its search after physical laws. They were an instrument for testing the soundness of the knowledge which we had, or thought we had, already; not an instrument facilitating for us the acquisition of new knowledge. It was for this latter purpose that Bacon devised, in the "Novum Organum," the rules of his new inductive logic. For what he demanded from the science was not a solution of the problem, "Given certain

premises, to deduce a logical conclusion," but an analysis of the conditions under which true premises or propositions, relative to phenomena, might be formed. The human mind being once turned into the track of the investigation of nature, it was obvious, that, to prevent waste of labor and rash generalization, the formation of such a logic was indispensable. Mr. Mill in his "System of Logic," and Sir John Herschel in his admirable "Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy," have done much to complete the Baconian design.

Whately and Hamilton, on the other hand, have treated logic rather upon its own merits as a formal science, than as a mere instrument of inquiry. Archbishop Whately's "Elements of Logic" exhibit, with beautiful precision of statement and felicity of illustration, the Aristotelian logic in an English dress. Sir W. Hamilton, having in view the cultivation of mental rather than of physical science, subjected the preliminary processes of logic, such as generalization and predication, to a new and very rigorous analysis, and has in many respects presented the technical parts of the science under a new light.

The logical weapon being brightened and made ready for action, the question next occurs, on what subject-matter it is to be employed. The school of physicists employ it at once in the investigation of nature; and the various hypotheses, theories, or laws of physical science, together with natural history and other accumulations of facts gained by observation and experiment, are the collective result. With such labors the student of literature has nothing to do. But for those who devote themselves to philosophy, in the ancient acceptation of the term, as to that study which will lead them to wisdom, the next step, after perfecting the

logical weapon, is psychology, or the study of the human mind. And as this study divides itself into two main branches, that of the moral affections and sentiments, and that of the intellectual faculties, we have a moral and an intellectual philosophy corresponding. The first branch has been cultivated among ourselves by Butler, Adam Smith, Paley, Hume, Hutcheson, and many others. Butler's admirable "Sermons," preached at the Rolls Chapel, are the most profound and important contributions to moral philosophy that our literature possesses. Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments,"[1] and Hume's "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals," are also celebrated works. Of these, and of the writings of the other English moralists, the reader will find an account in Sir James Mackintosh's "Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy."

Locke's famous "Essay on the Human Understanding," which belongs to that branch of psychology which investigates the intellectual faculties, holds a distinguished place not only in English but in universal literature. However, Locke examines many other besides purely psychological questions. The Scotch school of philosophers pushed this class of researches very far. Reid, Beattie, Dugald Stewart, and Brown carefully studied the intellect, and described its various powers. Reid, annoyed and scandalized at the scepticism of Hume, propounded the theory of instincts, and described a great number of intellectual judgments, which Locke and his followers had classed among acquired notions, as original and instinctive. He — but still more Beattie — carried this theory to the length of extravagance, and exposed himself to the

[1] A most interesting account of this work is given in the chapter on the Scottish intellect in the second volume of the late Mr. Buckle's History of Civilization.

ridicule of Priestley in his "Remarks on Dr. Reid's Inquiry." Hartley's work "On Man" is to a large extent psychological. Lastly, Sir W. Hamilton's Lectures contain probably a more exhaustive analysis of the intellectual processes and powers than the work of any other English writer.

After distinguishing and describing the powers of the human mind, philosophy in every past age has been accustomed to proceed to those further inquiries which are termed *metaphysical*, and to ask itself, Whence did this complex being which I have just examined take its origin? and what is its destination? in what relation does this finite stand to infinite intelligence? can we know any thing of the invisible and supersensual world that surrounds us? Glorious and elevating speculations! which it has become the fashion of moderate thinkers to decry as useless, but which for a certain class of minds, — and those not of the meanest capacity, — will possess to the end of time an invincible attraction. We can merely enumerate the most important among the works of English metaphysicians. Cudworth's "Intellectual System of the Universe" has for its general object, to prove, against Hobbes and the atheists, the existence and the goodness of God. Henry More, the most eminent among the school known as the Platonizing divines of the seventeenth century, is the author of "The Mystery of Godliness," "An Antidote against Atheism," "Enchiridion Metaphysicum," and other works, in which, with much that is noble and lofty, we remark too manifest a readiness to put faith, upon insufficient evidence, in any stories that tended to establish the presence of a mystical and supernatural element in human affairs. Parts of Locke's "Essay," particularly the first book, which discusses the question whether any of our ideas are innate, and decides it in the nega-

tive, are metaphysical. Berkeley's "Hylas and Philonous," and "Principles of Human Knowledge" are the treatises in which his ideal philosophy is expounded. As this philosophy has been much misunderstood, and Reid thought that he had said a clever thing when he had advised Berkeley to test its truth, and the reality of matter, by knocking his head against a post, it may serve a good purpose to extract the following remarks from Lewes's "Biographical History of Philosophy:"—

"When Berkeley denied the existence of matter, he meant by 'matter' that unknown *substratum*, the existence of which Locke had declared to be a necessary *inference* from our knowledge of qualities, but the nature of which must ever be altogether hidden from us. Philosophers had assumed the existence of substance, i.e., of a *noumenon* lying underneath all *phenomena*, a substratum supporting all qualities, a *something* in which all accidents *inhere*. This unknown substance Berkeley rejects. It is a mere abstraction, he says. If it is unknown, unknowable, it is a figment, and I will none of it; for it is a figment worse than useless; it is pernicious, as the basis of all atheism. If by matter you understand *that* which is seen, felt, tasted, and touched, then I say matter exists; I am as firm a believer in its existence as any one can be, and *herein I agree with the vulgar*. If, on the contrary, you understand by matter that occult substratum which is *not* seen, *not* felt, *not* tasted, and not touched, — that of which the senses do not, can not, inform you, — then I say I believe not in the existence of matter, and *herein I differ from the philosophers, and agree with the vulgar*."

In support of this view, Berkeley's own words are presently quoted: —

"I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sensation or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes, and touch with my hands, do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence I deny is that which philosophers call matter, or corporeal substance. And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it."

Hume, in his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," begins with some valuable definitions, which

may be considered to constitute an improvement, so far as they go, on the terminology of Locke, but ends with proposing "sceptical doubts," as applicable to every possible philosophical proposition which the mind can entertain. After Hume, the celebrated Kant in Germany took up the metaphysical debate, and produced his "Kritik der Reinen Vernunft," [1] a work which makes an epoch in philosophy. Among ourselves Hume was feebly answered, upon obvious common-sense grounds, by Reid and his followers; but they were rather psychologists than metaphysicians. Coleridge, whose genius pre-eminently fitted him to excel in metaphysics, has left, indeed, much that is of the highest value, but in a discontinuous, sketchy condition, and with large *desiderata*. The "Aids to Reflection" is the work which contains more of his mind upon the deepest questions than any other. "The Friend," and "The Literary Remains," while they illustrate to a great extent his metaphysical tenets, belong in form rather to the department of essays.

Political Science: Filmer, Hobbes, Milton, Burke.

Political science, as might have been expected in a country with such an eventful political history, owes much to English thinkers. The conservative and absolutist side has been ably and warmly argued; but, on the whole, the palm undoubtedly rests with the writers on the liberal and constitutional side. Sir Robert Filmer and the philosopher Hobbes, upon widely different grounds, wrote in support of arbitrary power. In his "Patriarcha" published in 1680, but written long before, Filmer maintained, not only against Milton and Grotius, but also against St. Thomas and Bellarmine, that men were not born free, but slaves; and that monarchs

[1] Critique of Pure Reason.

reigned with a patriarchal, absolute, and unquestionable right, derived, like that of Adam over his own household, immediately from God. Hobbes was an absolutist on quite other grounds. He believed in no divine right of kings; but he had the lowest possible opinion of subjects, that is, of mankind in general, and thought that to place power in the hands of the masses was the sure way to bring in anarchy. He was, therefore, in favor of a strong central government, which he would not allow to be thwarted in its task of repression by the licensed meddling of the persons, whether acting directly or by representation, who were subjected to it. Hobbes's political system is unfolded in several of his works, particularly the "De Cive" (1642), the "De Corpore Politico" (1650), and "The Leviathan" (1651).

On the other side occur the names of Fortescue in the fifteenth; Milton, Algernon Sidney, Harrington, and Locke in the seventeenth century; and Burke, Godwin, and Payne in the eighteenth; all of whom were in favor of liberal principles of government, however wide the gulf, in spirit and practical aims, which separated the republican Sidney from the constitutionalist Locke, or the author of "The Rights of Man" from the upholder of the sacredness of prescription. Milton's "Areopagitica; or, Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," though in form a mere pamphlet, is so full of weighty thoughts, which have since been adopted by the reason of civilized Europe, that we prefer to consider it as a contribution to political science. It is an argument for the freedom of the press, and is perhaps the most eloquent — certainly one of the least rugged — among the prose works of Milton. The following is one of the most important passages. After speaking of the glorious spectacle of a great nation

"renewing her mighty youth," and producing in boundless profusion the richest fruits of awakened intelligence, he proceeds: —

"What should ye do, then? Should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city? Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel?[1] Believe it, lords and commons! they who counsel ye to such a suppression do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and humane government; it is the liberty, lords and commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, — liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath ratified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders, of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, — oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the research and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that, unless ye re-enforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may despatch at will their own children. . . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all other liberties."

Harrington's "Oceana" has been already noticed.[2] Locke's two "Treatises on Government" were written as a reply to the "Patriarcha," and embody the famous doctrine of an "original compact" between prince and people. An interesting summary of them may be found in Hallam's "Literature of Europe." Among Burke's political writings, those which contain

[1] The censors of books are compared to those who *engross* or forestall all the corn in the market, and thus create an artificial scarcity.

[2] See p. 218.

the clearest and fullest statement of his political philosophy are, the "Reflections on the French Revolution," and the "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." His principles were constitutional and progressive, but anti-revolutionary. The "Appeal," &c., was occasioned by some slighting notice taken in Parliament of the "Reflections," as the work of a renegade Whig. Burke endeavors to show that the new Whigs have changed their principles, and not he; that from constitutionalists they have become revolutionists. The following striking passage occurs near the end of the treatise: —

"Place, for instance, before your eyes such a man as Montesquieu. Think of a genius not born in every country, or every time; a man gifted by nature with a penetrating aquiline eye, with a judgment prepared with the most extensive erudition, with an herculean robustness of mind, and nerves not to be broken with labor; a man who could spend twenty years in one pursuit. Think of a man, like the universal patriarch in Milton (who had drawn up before him in prophetic vision the whole series of the generations which were to issue from his loins), a man capable of placing in review, after having brought together from the east, the west, the north, and the south, from the coarseness of the rudest barbarism to the most refined and subtle civilization, all the schemes of government which had ever prevailed amongst mankind, weighing, measuring, collating, and comparing them all, joining fact with theory, and calling into council, upon all this infinite assemblage of things, all the speculations which have fatigued the understandings of profound reasoners in all times! Let us then consider that all these were but so many preparatory steps to qualify a man — and such a man, tinctured with no national prejudice, with no domestic affection, — to admire, and to hold out to the admiration of mankind, the constitution of England! And shall we Englishmen revoke to such a suit? Shall we, when so much more than he has produced remains still to be understood and admired, instead of keeping ourselves in the schools of real science, choose for our teachers men incapable of being taught; whose only claim to know is, that they have never doubted; from whom we can learn nothing but their own indocility; who would teach us to scorn what in the silence of our hearts we ought to adore?"

In the "Reflections," which we have not space to examine in detail, occurs the famous passage on Marie Antoinette and the "ages of chivalry."

Essays.

An essay, as its name implies, is an endeavor, within definite limits of time and subject, to attain to truth. It is the elucidation by thought of some one single topic, of which the mind had previously possessed an indistinct notion. The essay-writer stands at the opposite pole of thought to the system-monger; the first is ever analyzing and separating, the second grouping and generalizing. This style of writing, speaking generally, was unknown to the middle ages: it arose in the sixteenth century. Nor is the explanation obscure or far to seek. The general tendency of thought in the middle ages was to *totality;* to regard philosophy as one whole, truth as one, religion as one, nature as one. One of the typical books of the middle ages, the "Liber Sententiarum," is a *complete* theology, — *corpus theologiæ:* it traverses the entire field. But the general tendency of thought in modern times has been to separation and subdivision; to break up wholes, to mistrust generalizations; to examine the parts severally, and attain to a perfect knowledge of each individual part, in the hope of ultimately combining the knowledge of particulars into a sound theory of the whole. The same tendency of mind which has in the last three centuries produced and rendered popular so many volumes of essays and detached cogitations in literature, has in the scientific world resulted in the innumerable monographs, reports, and papers, by which each inquirer into nature, in his own special department, contributes to the already enormous stock of particular knowledge.

Essays do not include political tracts or pamphlets, from which we may easily distinguish them by considering the difference in the ends proposed. The end of an essay is knowledge; the end of a political tract or pamphlet, action. Logic appertains to the former, rhetoric to the latter. The essay-writer has answered his purpose if he presents to us a new and clearer view of the subject which he handles, and leads us to think upon it. The political writer has answered his purpose, if, whatever the view may be which he wishes to enforce, his arguments, whether they be sound or specions, tend to arouse his readers to action in the direction pointed out.

The heterogeneous character of the subjects of essays makes it useless, if not impossible, to classify them. An essay may be written about any thing whatever which an attentive thinker can place in a new light, or form a plausible theory about: there would, therefore, be no end to the division and subdivision. We shall merely notice some of the most remarkable collections of essays in our literature. Bacon's essays, concerning which some particulars were noted at p. 122, are the earliest in the series. As a specimen, we give a passage from the essay "Of Plantations," which must have been one of the latest composed, for it is evident from it that the colony of Virginia (founded in 1605) had then been in existence for several years: —

"Plantations are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works. When the world was young, it begat more children; but, now it is old, it begets fewer; for I may justly account new plantations to be the children of former kingdoms. I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where people are not *displanted*, to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation. Planting of countries is like planting of woods; for you must make account to lose almost twenty years' profit, and expect your recompense in the end. For the principal thing that hath been the destruction of most

plantations hath been the base and hasty drawing of profit in the first years. It is true, speedy profit is not to be neglected, as far as may stand with the good of the plantations, but no farther. It is a shameful and unblessed thing, to take the scum of people, and wicked, condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant. And not only so, but it spoileth the plantation; for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country, to the discredit of the plantation. . . . Consider, likewise, what commodities the soil, where the plantation is, doth naturally yield, that they may some way help to defray the charge of the plantation; so it be not, as was said, to the untimely prejudice of the main business, as it hath fared with tobacco in Virginia. Wood commonly aboundeth but too much; and therefore timber is fit to be one. If there be iron ore, and streams whereupon to set the mills, iron is a brave commodity where wood aboundeth. . . . For government, let it be in the hands of one, assisted with some counsel; and let them have commission to execute martial laws, with some limitation. And, above all, let men make that profit of being in the wilderness, as they have God always, and his service, before their eyes. . . . If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles; but use them justly and graciously, with sufficient guard nevertheless; and do not win their favor by helping them to invade their enemies, but for their defence it is not amiss. And send oft of them over to the country that plants, that they may see a better condition than their own, and commend it when they return."

Feltham's "Resolves," Bishop Hall's "Centuries of Meditations and Vows," and Browne's "Religio Medici," have all the character of essays. Hume's "Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary," published in 1742 and 1752, show a remarkable union of practical shrewdness with power of close and searching thought. In our own age, John Foster's "Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend" have obtained a high reputation. They are upon ethical subjects, written in a plain, strong style, and profoundly reasoned. Lord Macaulay's "Essays," most of which were originally contributed to "The Edinburgh Review," would generally fall, according to the terminology that we have adopted, under the head of Criticism; and the same remark applies to Jeffrey's "Essays."

Criticism.

Criticism may be, (1) philosophical, (2) literary, (3) artistic. Of the first kind, Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" is a splendid instance. After having, in the first book, expatiated in that beautiful language, not more thoughtful than it is imaginative, which he could command at pleasure, upon the dignity and utility of learning, he proceeds in the second part to consider what are the principal works or acts of merit which tend to promote learning. These, he decides, are conversant with, (1) the places of learning, (2) the books or instruments of learning, (3) the persons of the learned. He then passes in review the chief defects observable in the existing arrangements for the promotion of learning. One of these is, that "there hath not been, or very rarely been, any public designation of writers or inquirers concerning such parts of knowledge as may appear not to have been already sufficiently labored or undertaken; unto which point it is an inducement to enter into a view and examination, what parts of learning have been prosecuted, and what omitted; for the opinion of plenty is among the causes of want, and the great quantity of books maketh a show rather of superfluity than lack; which surcharge, nevertheless, is not to be remedied by making no more books, but by making more good books, which, as the serpent of Moses, might devour the serpents of the enchanters." The object of the work, therefore, is to institute a critical survey of the entire field of learning, with a view, partly to guide public patronage, partly to stimulate voluntary endeavors to cultivate the waste places indicated. And this survey he proceeds to make, dividing all learning into three branches, — history, philosophy, and poetry, — and noting what has been done, what overlooked, in each.

2. In the department of literary criticism, some admirable works have to be named. The earliest and one of the best among these is the Sir Philip Sidney's "Defence of Poesie" (mentioned at p. 123), from which we must find room for an extract, describing the invigorating moral effects of poetry: —

"Now, therein, of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it: nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you,— with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste, which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarbarum they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So is it in men, most of whom are childish in the best things till they be cradled in their graves: glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas; and hearing them must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valor, and justice, which if they had been barely (that is to say, philosophically) set out, they would swear they be brought to school again. That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other: insomuch that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made, in political imitation, delightful. Truly I have known men, that even with reading 'Amadis de Gaul,' which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect poesie, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. Who readeth Æneas carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom do not those words of Turnus move (the tale of Turnus having planted his image in the imagination)? —

'Fugientem hæc terra videbit?
Usque adeone mori miserum est?' "

The critical passages which occur in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" appear to be in the main just and sound. Shakspearian criticism has given rise to an entire library of its own. Fielding led the way, by the admiring yet discerning notices of the great dramatist which he introduced in his "Tom Jones." The prefaces and notes of Pope and Johnson followed; at a later date appeared Hazlitt's "Characters," and the critical notices in Coleridge's "Literary Remains."

But the greatest achievement of literary criticism that we can point to is Hallam's "Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries." This is a book of which the sagacity and the calmness are well matched with the profound erudition. A certain coldness or dryness of tone is often noticeable, which seems not to be wondered at; for it is not easy to imagine that the man who spent so large a portion of his moral existence in surveying the labors and mastering the thoughts of men of the utmost diversity of aspiration and opinion could have felt a very warm personal interest in any of their systems.

Among works on poetical criticism, we can scarcely err in assigning a high and permanent place to Mr. Thackeray's "Lectures on the English Humorists."

3. In artistic criticism, the same remark might be hazarded as to Mr. Ruskin's "Modern Painters" and "Stones of Venice." Nothing else of much importance can be named, except Horace Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting," and Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Lectures."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

ON ENGLISH METRES.

THERE exists no work of any authority, so far as I am aware, upon the metres used by our poets, except Dr. Guest's "History of English Rhymes," which is too long and too intricate for general use. In the absence, then, of better guidance, the following brief description and classification of English metres may be of use to students: —

Metre is the arrangement into verse of definite measures of sounds, definitely accented. Thus the hexameter is the arrangement in lines of six equivalent quantities of sound, called feet, each of which consists, or has the value, of two long syllables, and is accented on the first syllable. The heroic metre, when strictly regular, is the arrangement in rhymed couplets of five feet, each foot being equivalent to an iambus (a short and a long syllable), and accented on the *last* syllable. In practice, spondees and trochees are often introduced, the accent is often laid on the *first* syllable of a foot, and there are frequently not more than four, sometimes not more than three, accents in a line.

Rhyme is the regular recurrence in metre of similar sounds. There are four principal kinds, — the perfect, the alliterative, the assonantal, and the consonantal. In the perfect rhyme, the rhyming syllables correspond throughout: in other words, they are identical. It is common in French poetry, but rare in English; e.g., —

"Selons divers besoins, il est une *science*
D'etendre les liens de notre con*science*." — MOLIÈRE.

The alliterative rhyme is the correspondence of the initial consonants of the rhyming syllables. This is the ordinary rhythm of the Anglo-Saxon, and also of the Scandinavian poetry; e.g., —

"Éadward kínge, éngla hláford
Sénde sóthfœste sáwle to críste
On gódes wǽra, gást háligne." [1]

These lines, which represent the most common of Anglo-Saxon rhythms, have each four accents, and either three or two rhyming syllables, which are always accented. When the rhyming syllables begin with vowels, these vowels are usually different, though not always.

The assonantal rhyme is the correspondence of the vowels merely in the rhyming syllables. It is of two kinds: in the first, the vowel ends the syllable; in the second, it is followed by a consonant, or a consonant and vowel. The first kind occurs continually in English poetry; the second, never; but it is a favorite rhyme with the Spanish poets. Examples: —

(1) "If she seem not so to me,
What care I how good she be?"

(2) "Ferid los, cavalleros, por amor de caridad;
Yo soy Ruy Diaz el Cid, Campeador de Bibar." [2]
Ballad of the Cid.

The consonantal rhyme is the ordinary rhyme of English poetry: it is the correspondence of the vowel and the *final* consonant or consonants in the rhyming syllables. Examples: —

"Golden boys and girls all m*ust*,
Like chimney-sweepers, come to d*ust*."

[1] From Guest's Rhythms, ii. 70. His translation is, —

"King Edward, lord of the Engle,
Sent his righteous soul to Christ,
(In God's promise trusting) a spirit holy."

[2] "Smite them, knights, for the love of charity;
I am Ruy Diaz the Cid, champion of Bivar."

All that has been said hitherto applies only to single rhymes, the masculine rhyme of the Italians. The double, or feminine rhyme, which is the ordinary rhyme of Italian poetry, is also common with us. The first syllables form always a consonantal or assonantal (No. 1) rhyme; the second syllables, a perfect rhyme. Examples: —

"Ecco da mille voci unita*men-te*,
Gerusalemme salutar si *sen-te*." — TASSO: *Geru. Liber.*

"And join with thee calm Peace and *Qui-et*,
Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth *di-et*."

In the triple rhyme, called "sdrucciola" by the Italians, the first syllables follow the same rule as in the double rhyme; the second and third must be, in English poetry at least, perfect rhymes. Example: —

"Kings may be blest, but Tam was *glo-ri-ous*,
O'er all the ills of life vic*to-ri-ous*."

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to enumerate the principal kinds of feet used in English poetry. A long syllable is represented by the mark (¯), a short syllable by the mark (˘).[1] Two short syllables are equivalent to, or have the metrical value of, one long syllable; except at the end of a line, where one, two, and even occasionally three short syllables may be introduced *ex abundanti*, or by way of re-

[1] In English poetry, length or quantity depends almost entirely upon accent. Accented syllables are long, unaccented short. In Greek and Latin poetry, as is well known, quantity is something intrinsic in each syllable, and depends upon the nature of the vowel, and the consonant or consonants following it. Our ears, trained to mark the accents only, take little notice of this kind of quantity; yet those poets who utterly neglect it are felt to write roughly and unmelodiously, though most of us could not explain distinctly the grounds of the feeling. A Roman ear could not have endured such a dactyl as *far in the*, because to it the *in* would be made irredeemably long by position. This we scarcely notice, but even an English ear would stumble at such a dactyl as, e.g., *far midst the*.

dundancy; and must be considered as having no metrical value. The feet most used are, —

The spondee (– –)
The iambus (⏑ –)
The trochee (– ⏑)
The dactyl (– ⏑ ⏑)
The anapæst (⏑ ⏑ –)
The amphiambus [1] (⏑ – ⏑)

English metres may be divided into, 1, the unrhymed; 2, the rhymed. The first, in which a comparatively small portion of our poetry is written, may be quickly disposed of. They are of three kinds: hexameters, blank verse, and choral metres. The general rule governing the formation of English hexameters has been already given; it need only be added, that the last or sixth foot must always be a spondee, and the fifth ordinarily a dactyl, though a spondee is also admissible. Example: —

"Felt she in | myriad | springs her | sources | fār ĭn thĕ | mountāins |
Stirring, col-|lecting, | heaving, up-|rising, | forth out-|flowing. |"
CLOUGH.

Blank verse is a continuous metre, consisting, in its most perfect form, of lines containing five iambuses, each iambus being accented on the last syllable. In other words, it is a decasyllabic metre, having the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth syllables accented. We have not space to discuss here all the variations from this form, which are numerous; but the student will find the subject ably handled in Johnson's papers, in "The Rambler," on Milton's versification. The following examples illustrate the principal variations, which affect, 1, the position of the accents; 2, their number; 3, the termination of the line: —

[1] Using the analogy of the Homeric *δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον* I have, for the sake of convenience, substituted this term for the more usual "amphibrachys," from which it is impossible to form an adjective.

"When dówn | alóng | by pléa|sant Tém|pe's stréam | (1)
Léft for | repén|tance, nóne | for pár|don léft | (2)
In-fi-|nite wráth,| and in|fi-nite | despáir | } (3)
How ó-|vercóme | this díre | ca-lám-|ity | }
To the | last sýl-|lable of | recór-|ded time | (4)
To-mór-|row and | to-mór-|row and | to-mór-|row | (5)
Who can | be wíse, | amázed, | témperate, | and fu-|ri-ous | (6)

In (1), a strictly regular line, the accents are five in number, and occupy their normal positions. In (2) they are still five; but the first syllable is accented, instead of the second. In each of the two examples of (3) there are but four accents, differently placed in each line. In (4) there are but three accents. In (5) there is one, and in (6) two, redundant syllables.

In most English decasyllabic verse, whether blank or rhymed, the line with four accents predominates. It is often possible to find a dozen lines in succession so accented in Shakspeare and Milton. But in Pope's decasyllabics, as might be expected from so perfect a versifier, the line with five accents predominates. The effect of the variation in the *position* of the accents is to prevent the monotony which would arise from the perpetual recurrence of iambuses. It answers the same purpose as the free intermixture of dactyls and spondees in the hexameter. The effect of the reduction in the *number* of accents is to quicken the movement of the line. This explains why lines of five accents are the exception, not the rule, in Shakspeare; for the dramatic movement, as representing dialogue, and the actual conflict of passions, is essentially more rapid than either the epic or didactic. With less justification Wordsworth in "The Excursion" frequently introduces lines of only three accents, such as, —

"By the déformities of brutish vice."

Such lines can seldom be so managed as to make other than an unpleasing impression on the ear. The license of redundant syllables is allowed in dramatic, but not in epic verse. Milton does indeed use it, but sparingly. In eighty lines taken at random from the "Paradise Lost," I have found four instances of redundancy; in the same number of lines similarly taken from the play of "King John," eighteen instances.

Choral metres may be designated according to the kind of foot which predominates in them. Those used in Southey's "Thalaba" are dactylic or iambic: —

"In the Dom- | daniel | caverns,
Under the | roots of the | ocean;"

And, —

"Sail on, | sail on, | quoth Tha-|laba,
Sail on, | in Al-|lah's name. | "

In "Queen Mab" they are iambic, and in the "Strayed Reveller" trochaic: —

"F̄astĕr, | f̄astĕr, |
O | Circe, | Goddess. | "

RHYMED METRES.

Every English rhymed metre is in one of three measures, the iambic, the trochaic, the triple.

Again, all rhymed metres are either continuous or in stanzas.

Continuous Verse.

I. The following is a list of continuous rhyming metres, in iambic measure: —

1. Tetrasyllabics; e.g., —

"Thĕ stēel | wĕ tōuch, |
Forced ne'er | so much, |
Yet still | removes |
To that | it loves. | " — DRAYTON (in *Guest*).

2. Octosyllabics, having, in strictness, four accents; e.g., —

"Woe worth | the chase! | woe worth | the day! |
That cost | thy life, | my gal-|lant gray! | "

This metre is extremely common; most of the old romances are in it, as well as Scott's and Byron's romantic poems (except "Lara" and "The Corsair"), "Hudibras," "Lalla Rookh," &c.

3. Decasyllabics, having, in strictness, five accents. If rhyming in couplets, they form the famous heroic metre: —

"Awake! | my St. | John, leave | all mea-|ner things |
To low | ambi-|tion, and | the pride | of kings. | "

It is needless to remark that an enormous quantity of verse has been composed in this metre. Sometimes the rhymes occur irregularly, as in "Lycidas:" —

"Fame is | the spur | that the | clear spirit | doth raise, |
(That last | infir-|mity | of no|ble minds) |
To scorn | delights | and live | labo-|rious days, | " &c.

Endecasyllabics, which constitute the heroic metre of the Italians, fall, in our metrical system, under the description of redundant lines. As exceptions to the decasyllabic rule, they occur very frequently; but still only serve to prove that rule, like other exceptions.

4. The Alexandrine, or twelve-syllable metre, having in strictness six accents. This is the metre used by some of our old rhyming chroniclers, and by Drayton in his "Polyolbion;" it is also the heroic metre of France: but with us it has fallen into disuse for three centuries. Example: —

"The black | and dark-|some nights, | the bright | and glad-|some days
Indiff-|erent are | to him, | his hope | on God | that stays."
DRAYTON (in *Guest*).

5. The fourteen-syllable metre, with seven accents. This measure occurs in some old metrical legends, and was used by Chapman in his translation of the Iliad; but it is lumber-

ing and unwieldy, and as such had long been laid aside by our poets, until revived by Mr. F. Newman, who stripped it of rhyme, and enriched it with a redundant syllable: —

"O gen-|tle friend! | if thou | and I | from this | encoun-|ter sca-|ping,
Hereaf-|ter might | for-e-|ver be | from eld | and death | exemp-|ted."

The following is from Chapman: —

"To all | which Jove's | will gave | effect; | from whom | strife first |
begunne |
Betwixt | Atri-|des, king | of men, | and The-|tis' god-|like sonne. | "

Combinations of some of these five metres have been occasionally employed, but with indifferent success. Thus Surrey joined the fourteen-syllable metre to the Alexandrine: —

"When so-|mer took | in hand | the win-|ter to | assaile, |
With force | of might | and ver-|tue great | his stor-|my blasts | to
quail. | "

II. *Trochaics.* — In continuous verse, two trochaic measures are in use, — the fifteen syllable and the seven syllable. In the latter, eight-syllable lines, containing four full trochees, are of common occurrence; but the characteristic line of the measure is of seven syllables, and contains three trochees and a long syllable.

1. The fifteen-syllable trochaic line is, in fact, a combination of the eight syllable and the seven syllable. It is not common; the best example of it is "Locksley Hall: " —

"Fōol! ă-|gāin thē | drēam, thē | fāncy‖bŭt Ī | knōw mȳ | wōrds wēre |
wīld, |
But I | count the | gray bar-|barian ‖ lower | than the | Christian |
child.

2. The seven-syllable measure, both in continuous verse, and, as we shall presently see, in stanzas, was a great favorite with Keats and Shelley. In it the latter composed his "Lines written in the Euganean Hills," and Keats his "Ode

on the Poets," and "The Mermaid Tavern." Shakspeare also used it, as in the lines beginning, —

"On a | day, a-|lack the | day! | "

The intermixture of eight-syllable lines is exemplified in the following quotation : —

"Thus ye | live on | high, and | then |
On the | earth ye | live a- | gain; |
And the | souls ye | left be-|hind you, |
Teach us, | here, the | way to | find you. | "

Other mixed measures occasionally occur, as in Shakspeare's "Crabbed Age and Youth," &c., which contains fives, sixes, and sevens.

III. In *triple measures* there is but one accent for every three syllables; while, in the iambic and trochaic, there is one for every two. There is a close analogy between poetry in these measures, and music in triple time; a dancing lightness and gliding rapidity are characteristic of both. They are of three kinds, according to the foot which predominates in them, — dactylic, anapæstic, and amphiambic. I can recollect no instances of the use of a triple measure in continuous verse, except Campbell's "Lochiel" and Walsh's "Despairing Lover." The former is in amphiambic endecasyllabic rhyming couplets, each line containing three amphiambuses and an iambus, —

"Lochiel, | Lochiel, | beware of | the day |
When | the Lowlands | shall meet thee | in battle | array; | "

the latter in amphiambic fives and sixes; each line containing either an amphiambus and an iambus, or two amphiambuses; e.g,. —

"Though | his suit was | rejected, |
He sadly | reflected |
That | a lover | forsaken |
A new love | may get, |
But | a neck that's | once broken |
Can never | be set. | "

In these examples, the words "when," "though," "that," and "but" are redundant syllables.

Stanzas.

The varieties of the stanza or stave are almost countless; some of the most common forms only can be noticed here. I again adopt the division into iambic, trochaic, and triple measures.

I. 1. The decasyllabic quatrain, or four-line stave, with alternating rhymes. Davenant's "Gondibert," Dryden's "Elegy on Cromwell" and "Annus Mirabilis," Gray's "Elegy," and many other considerable poems, are in this metre. A specimen of it may be found at p. 93.

2. The six-line stave is not uncommon; it is used by Southwell in his pretty poems, "Time goes by Turns," and "Scorn not the Least." It is the preceding four-line stave, with the addition of a rhyming couplet at the end.

3. The Chaucerian heptastich, or seven-line decasyllabic stave. It has three rhymes, — one connecting the first and third lines; another, the second, fourth, and fifth; and the third, the sixth and seventh lines. For an example, see pp. 451, 2. Down to the reign of Elizabeth, no measure was a greater favorite with our poets than this.

4. The *ottava rima*, or eight-line decasyllabic stave. This is the heroic metre of the Italians, in which Tasso and Ariosto wrote. With us it has been seldom used; the chief example is "Don Juan." It has three rhymes, thus arranged: 1, 3, 5; 2, 4, 6; 7, 8.

5. The Spenserian stanza, or nine-line decasyllabic stave, closed by an Alexandrine. It also has three rhymes, thus arranged: 1, 3; 2, 4, 5, 7; 6, 8, 9. For examples, see p. 449.

6. The sonnet, or fourteen-line decasyllabic stave, of which there are several varieties. The sonnets of Shakspeare scarcely deserve the name in a metrical sense, their construction being so inartificial. They have no fewer than seven rhymes, and consist merely of three quatrains, with

alternating rhymes, followed by a rhyming couplet. All our other poets, so far as I know, follow, in writing sonnets, the Petrarcan model, with some unimportant deviations. The sonnet of Petrarch is composed of two quatrains, with extreme and mean rhymes,[1] two in number; followed by six lines, of which the rhymes are arranged in several different ways. The most ordinary case is that in which the six lines have but two rhymes, and are arranged in three rhyming couplets. Milton's sonnet on his deceased wife is an example of this kind. If the six lines have three rhymes, they usually follow each other in order, as shown in the following passage, taken from Milton's sonnet to Cyriack Skinner: —

> "To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
> Towards solid good what leads the nearest way;
> For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
> And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
> That with superfluous burden loads the day,
> And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains."

Other varieties of arrangement may be found in the sonnets of Drummond, Milton, and Wordsworth; but they only affect the six concluding lines. The two opening quatrains, with their two rhymes, and the peculiar arrangement of these rhymes, are a fixed element in the sonnet. It has generally, at least in Italian poetry, four, and must never have more than five rhymes.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the different kinds of staves formed out of octosyllabics, and the combination of these with shorter lines. Three of these staves, the octosyllabic quatrain, the quatrain in eights and sixes, and the quatrain in sixes, with the third line octosyllabic, are commonly called, long measure, common measure, and short measure. The six-line stave, in eights and sixes, was a favorite measure with the old romance-writers. I call it the "Sir Thopas metre," because Chaucer uses it for his "Rime of

[1] That is, rhymes connecting the first with the fourth, and the second with the third, lines.

Sir Thopas," in the Canterbury Tales. A rough specimen of it may be seen at p. 56. The eight-line stave, formed of two quatrains in eights, or in eights and sixes, with alternating rhymes, is also common. But enough has now been said to enable the student to recognize and describe for himself any iambic measure that he may meet with.

II. Trochaic staves, though much used by our poets, do not present the same well-marked forms as the iambic staves. The predominant line is of seven syllables, that is, contains three trochees and a long syllable. However, octosyllabic lines of four trochees are of constant occurrence in heptasyllabic staves. The six-line stave in sevens, exemplified by the lines at p. 446, by Jonson's "Hymn to Diana" (1), and many other pieces, and the eight-line stave in eights and sevens, exemplified by Glover's "Hosier's Ghost" (2), are perhaps the most important among pure trochaic staves: —

(1) "Queen and | huntress, | chaste and | fair, |" &c.

(2) "As near | Porto- | bello | lying |
On the | gently | swelling | flood. |"

A very beautiful metre sometimes results from the combination of a trochaic with an iambic measure. Thus in Shelley's "Skylark" (see p. 455), a trochaic quatrain in sixes and fives is followed by an Alexandrine, the length and weight of which serves beautifully to balance and tone down the light joyousness of the trochaics. Shelley has given us another beautiful combination, that of trochees with dactyls. Example: —

"When the | lamp is | shattered, |
The | light in the | dust lies | dead, |"&c.

III. In triple measures, three important staves may be distinguished, — the quatrain, the six-line stave, and the eight-line stave. Each of these three, again, may be either dactylic, anapæstic, or amphiambic; but the last is infinitely the most common variety of the three.

1. *Quatrains.* — The dactylic quatrain, each line of which contains three dactyls, followed either by a long syllable or a trochee, is not very common. There is an example in one of Byron's "Hebrew Melodies," — the "Song of Saul before his Last Battle:" —

"Farewell to | others, but | never we | part, |
Heir to my | royalty, | son of my | heart; | "

and, again, —

"Brightest and | best of the | sons of the | morning. | " — HEBER.

The anapæstic quatrain is distinguishable from the dactylic by the fact of its commencing with an anapæst. In triple measures, the foot with which a poem opens is nearly always a key to its metre. In the following example spondees are mixed with the anapæsts: —

"Not a drum | was heard, | not a fu-|neral note. | — WOLFE.

A purer specimen may be found in one of the Hebrew melodies, in which the line contains three anapæsts: —

"And the voice | of my mourn-|ing is o'er, |
And the moun-|tains behold | me no more. | "

The amphiambic quatrain, in which each line has either four amphiambuses, or three with an iambus, is the metre of a great number of ballads and songs. The lines are sometimes coupled, sometimes alternate. Examples: —

"I saw from | the beach, when | the morning | was shining, |
A bark o'er | the waters | move glorious-|ly on. | " — MOORE.

"Count Albert | has armed him | the Paynim | among, |
Though | his heart it | was false, yet | his arm it | was strong."
SCOTT.

2. The six-line stave, triple measure, is only used, so far as I know, in amphiambic endecasyllabics. Scott's "Lochinvar" is an instance.

3. The eight-line stave in the amphiambic tetrameter, or tetrameter catalectic,[1] is a noble measure. Examples: —

"Then blame not | the bard if | in pleasure's | soft dream, |" &c.
MOORE.

"I climbed the | dark brow of | the mighty | Helvellyn. |" — SCOTT.

There are also eight-line staves in fives, and in fives and sixes. These are dactylic. Examples: —

"Over the | mountains, |
And | over the | waves, |
Under the | fountains,
And | under the | graves, |" &c.

"Where shall the | traitor rest, |
He the de-|ceiver, |" &c. — SCOTT.

A dactylic stave in sixes, fives, and fours, varying in the number of lines, was used by Hood with great effect in his "Bridge of Sighs:" —

"One more unfortunate, |
Weary of | breath, |
Rashly im-|portunate, |
Gone to her | death. |"

There are many other varieties, but the rules already given will probably enable the student to name and classify them as he falls in with them.

PINDARIC MEASURES.

These hold an intermediate position between stanzas and continuous verse. They are divided into strophes, which seldom contain more than twenty-eight or fewer than four-

[1] A line which falls short by one syllable of the full measure of four amphiambuses, is so designated.

teen lines. Irregularity may be said to be their law: the lines, as well as the strophes, are of different lengths, and the rhymes are arranged in half a dozen ways. For an example, see p. 445. As a general rule, they are in iambic measure; but trochaic lines are sometimes introduced with striking effect. Thus in Gray's "Bard," which consists of nine strophes, six containing fourteen, and three, twenty lines, each shorter strophe opens with a trochaic line, so as to produce the sense of *abruptness* which the poet was aiming at: —

"Ruin | seize thee, | ruthless | king! |
Confu-|sion on | thy ban-|ners wait! | "

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Abbreviations: Bp. for Bishop; Abp. for Archbishop; flor. for floruit (flourished); *n.* for note. When only one date is given, it is that of *death*.

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SUMMARIES

OF

LITERARY PERIODS.

SUMMARIES OF LITERARY PERIODS.

Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Literature, A.D. 449–1350. (Chap. I.)

Anglo-Saxon Writers.[1]

- **Poets** . . . . .
  - CÆDMON (A.D. 680; author of a Scripture History in alliterative verse).
  - The author of *Beowulf*.
- **Prose Writers**
  - KING ALFRED.
  - The compilers of the *Saxon Chronicle*.

Anglo-Norman Writers.

- **Poets** . . .
  - LAYAMON.
  - ORMIN (author of the *Ormulum*).
  - ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER (author of a rhyming Chronicle).
  - ROBERT MANNING.
  - The author of *Havelok*, the earliest known English romance.
  - RICHARD ROLLE (A.D. 1340, author of the *Pricke of Conscience*, a moral poem).
- **Prose Writers.**[2]

[1] As a rule, learned Anglo-Saxons, among whom the Venerable Bede is the most eminent, composed their works in Latin. The same may be said of writers in the Anglo-Norman period, particularly during the early portion of it.

[2] No English prose, except Homilies, Proclamations, Charters, etc., was produced in this period.

Early English Literature, 1350–1450. (Chap. II.)

Poets.

- MINOT.
- LANGLAND.
- CHAUCER.
- GOWER.
- The author of *Piers Plowman's Crede*.
- OCCLEVE.
- LYDGATE.
- Scottish.
  - BARBOUR.
  - WYNTON.
  - JAMES I.

Prose Writers.

- Sir JOHN MANDEVILLE.
- JOHN WYCLIFFE.
- CHAUCER.
- TREVISA.

Literature of the Renaissance Period, 1450-1558. (Chap. III.)

- **Poets.**
  - JOHN KAYE (first poet laureate).
  - HAWES.
  - BARCLAY.
  - SKELTON.
  - SURREY.
  - WYAT.
  - SACKVILLE.
  - The authors of the *Mirror for Magistrates*.
  - Dramatic. Scottish.
    - HENRYSON.
    - DUNBAR.
    - GAWAIN DOUGLAS.
    - Sir DAVID LYNDSAY.
  - The authors of the
    - *Coventry Mysteries*,
    - *Chester Mysteries*,
    - *Towneley Mysteries*.
- **Scholars and Humanists.**[1]
  - WILLIAM GROCYN.
  - LINACRE.
  - Dean COLET.
  - Cardinal WOLSEY.
  - Sir THOMAS MORE.
  - LELAND.
  - Sir JOHN CHEKE.
  - Cardinal POLE.
- **Prose Writers.**
  - General . . .
    - Sir JOHN FORTESCUE.
    - CAXTON.
    - MORE.
    - BALE.
    - ASCHAM.
  - Chroniclers .
    - CAPGRAVE.
    - FABYAN.
    - HALL.
    - GRAFTON.
  - Theological Writers . .
    - PECOCK.
    - LATIMER.
    - TYNDALE.
    - Bishop FISHER.
    - MORE.
    - BECON.

[1] The revived study of the ancient authors, whose works treat of men and women and the joys and sorrows of life, was called a *Humanity*, by way of contrast with the scholastic studies then prevalent, which dealt with terms, causes, ideas, theories, and generally employed *abstract* reasoning. And whereas those who shone in the scholastic learning were called *Schoolmen*, so to those who shone in the new classical learning was given the name of *Humanists*.

The Elizabethan Literature, 1558-1625. (Chap. IV.)

- **Poets.**
  - Spenser.
  - Shakspeare.
  - Southwell.
  - Daniel.
  - Drayton.
  - Chapman (and many minor poets).
  - **Dramatic.**
    - Udall.
    - Sackville and Norton.
    - Marlowe.
    - Peele.
    - Greene.
    - Shakspeare.
    - Ben Jonson.
    - Beaumont and Fletcher.
    - Massinger.
    - Ford.
    - Webster (and many minor dramatists).
- **Prose Writers.**
  - **General . . .**
    - Spenser.
    - Lyly.
    - Sir Philip Sidney.
    - Hakluyt.
    - Francis Bacon.
    - Burton.
    - Puttenham.
  - **Historians . .**
    - Holinshed.
    - Camden.
    - Speed.
    - Knolles.
    - Raleigh.
  - **Theological Writers . .**
    - Jewel.
    - Harding.
    - Hooker.
    - Andrewes.
  - **Philosophical Writers . .** Francis Bacon (chief founder of the Experimental Philosophy).

Literature of the Seventeenth Century, 1625-1700. (Chap. V.)

- **Poets.**
  - Ben Jonson.
  - The Fantastic School:
    - Cowley, Crashaw, &c.
  - Milton.
  - George Herbert.
  - The Song-Writers:
    - Carew, Waller, Lovelace, Herrick, &c.
  - Drummond of Hawthornden.
  - Wither.
  - Dryden.
  - Samuel Butler.
  - Earl of Roscommon.
  - **Dramatic.**
    - Dryden (Heroic and other plays).
    - Otway.
    - Shadwell.
    - Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, } Comedy of Manners.
- **Prose Writers.**
  - General . . .
    - John Bunyan.
    - Anthony à Wood.
    - Thomas Fuller.
    - Izaak Walton.
    - Richard Baxter.
    - Samuel Pepys.
    - John Evelyn.
    - Sir Thomas Browne.
  - Scholars . . .
    - Usher.
    - Selden.
    - Gale.
  - Historians . .
    - Fuller.
    - Lord Clarendon.
    - Ludlow.
    - May.
    - Whitlocke.
  - Theological Writers . .
    - Chillingworth.
    - Patristic Divines:
      - Bishops Hall, Taylor, Bull, and Pearson.
      - Isaac Barrow.
    - William Penn.
    - Lightfoot.
    - Latitudinarian Divines:
      - Leighton, Henry More, Cudworth.
  - Philosophical Writers . .
    - Hobbes.
    - Cudworth.
    - Harrington.
    - Locke.
    - The Royal Society founded;
      - Sir Isaac Newton.

Poets.

Age of Anne: POPE, ADDISON, PRIOR, GAY, SWIFT.
THOMSON.
~~SHENSTONE.~~
YOUNG.
~~CHURCHILL.~~
GRAY.
GOLDSMITH.
JOHNSON.
COWPER.
BURNS.

Dramatic.

ADDISON.
STEELE,
~~ROWE.~~
FARQUHAR.
Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.
R. B. SHERIDAN.

Prose Writers.

General . . .

SWIFT.
DEFOE.
The Essayists: ADDISON, STEELE, &c.; BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.*
The Novelists: RICHARDSON, FIELDING, STERNE, SMOLLETT, GOLDSMITH, &c.
Dr. JOHNSON.
EDMUND BURKE.
The Orators: Lord CHATHAM, BURKE, FOX, ALEXANDER HAMILTON,* ~~HENRY GRATTAN.~~
The author of the *Letters of Junius*.
JAMES BOSWELL.

Scholars . . .

Dr. BENTLEY.
Dean ALDRICH.
PORSON.
~~Bishop~~ LOWTH.
~~POCOCKE.~~

Historians . .

BURNET.
RAPIN.
HUME.
ROBERTSON.
GIBBON.
T. WARTON.

Theological Writers . .

The English Deists: TOLAND, TINDAL, BOLINGBROKE, &c.
The Apologists: BENTLEY; Bishops BERKELEY, BUTLER, and WARBURTON; PALEY.
~~CONYERS~~ MIDDLETON.
Bishop ~~CHALLONER~~.
JONATHAN EDWARDS.*

Philosophical Writers . .

BERKELEY (Idealism).
HUME (Scepticism).
REID, BROWN, DUGALD STEWART, } Common-sense Philosophy.
Bishop BUTLER, HUTCHESON, ADAM SMITH, HARTLEY, PALEY, } Moral Philosophy.
BURKE, WILLIAM GODWIN, THOMAS PAINE, } Political Philosophy.
ADAM SMITH (Political Economy).

[NOTE. — American writers are distinguished by an asterisk.]

Anglo-American Literature of Modern Times, 1800-1850. (Chap. VII.)

Poets.

- Sir Walter Scott.
- Wordsworth.
- Southey.
- Coleridge.
- Byron.
- Shelley.
- Moore.
- Keats.
- Crabbe.
- Campbell.
- T. Hood.
- Letitia Hemans (and many minor poets).
- R. H. Dana.*
- F. Halleck.*
- W. C. Bryant.*
- H. W. Longfellow.*

Dramatic.

- Sheridan Knowles.
- Joanna Baillie.
- Lytton-Bulwer.

Prose Writers.

General . . .

Oratory:
Canning, Henry Clay,* Daniel Webster,* O'Connell, Sir Robert Peel, E. Everett.*

Essayists:
Lamb, Hazlitt, Professor Wilson, Jeffrey, Irving,* De Quincey, Emerson.*

Novelists:
Jane Austen, Scott, Godwin, J. Fenimore Cooper,* Bulwer, Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne.*

William Cobbett.
Sydney Smith.
Thomas Carlyle.
John Ruskin.
George Ticknor.*

Historians . .

- W. Mitford.
- J. Lingard.
- T. Arnold.
- H. Hallam.
- W. H. Prescott.*
- G. Grote.
- T. B. Macaulay.
- G. Bancroft.*
- Carlyle.

Theological Writers . .

- W. E. Channing.*
- J. Milner.
- S. T. Coleridge.
- Robert Hall.
- Richard Whately.
- E. B. Pusey.
- J. H. Newman.
- Cardinal Wiseman.

Philosophical Writers . .

- Sir James Mackintosh.
- Coleridge.
- Jeremy Bentham.
- David Ricardo.
- Whately.
- John Stuart Mill.
- Sir William Hamilton.

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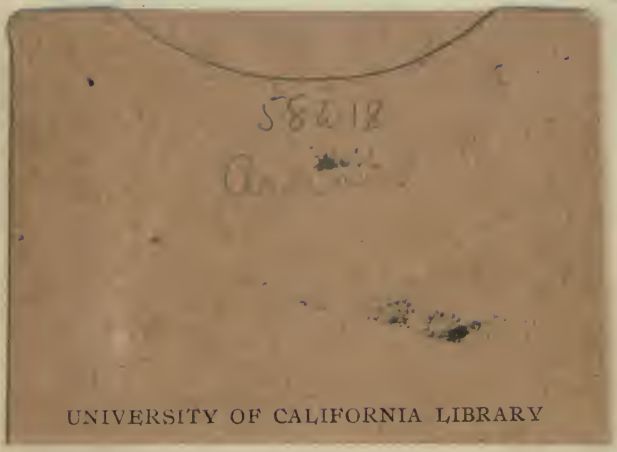
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